

THE
HIGH-CHURCHMAN DISARMED:

A DEFENSE OF

OUR METHODIST FATHERS.



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Dedication.

TO THE ILLUSTRIOUS MEN
WHO MADE THE HISTORY OF
THE FIRST HUNDRED YEARS OF AMERICAN METHODISM,

*Part of Whom Have Crossed the Flood, and Have Left Their
Precepts and Examples as Guides to Their Successors;*

TO THE VENERABLE MEN
WHO HELPED TO SHAPE
The Constitution of a Church whose Object it is "to Spread
Scriptural Holiness Over These Lands;"

TO THE FAITHFUL MEN
Who Still Linger on the Shores of Time,
*Having "Borne the Burden and Heat of the Day," and are Waiting
for the Command to "Come up Higher;"*

THESE PAGES ARE RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED

BY

THE AUTHOR.

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Introduction.

THE High-church party in the Church of England is represented by a quarterly periodical which bears the exclusive title of *The Church Review*. In the number for January, 1885, there is an article reviewing a recent publication—"The Life of Bishop Seabury," by Rev. E. Edwards Beardsley, D.D., LL.D., of New Haven, United States of America. The year 1884 was the centennial anniversary of Bishop Seabury's ordination by the Scotch Non-jurors, and the occasion was opportune for the appearance of the book in London.

In the course of his article the reviewer, having reached the period of suspense which ended in Dr. Seabury's abandonment of hope from the English bishops, and his application to the Non-jurors of Scotland, says:

"At this crisis the all-sufficient John Wesley intervened as a *deus ex machinâ* to settle the question in the plenitude of his self-created apostolate. Nothing daunted by his own notorious failure in America, he took upon himself, in his bed-chamber at Bristol, on September 2, 1784, to consecrate one Thomas Coke to the office of 'superintendent,' which in America was promptly translated into bishop. Coke having performed the same ceremony upon Aston, the 'Methodist Episcopal Church' was added to the other sects bubbling in the colonial caldron, and in spite of

Charles Wesley's epigram, it quickly lost sight of its origin:

'How easily are bishops made
By man or woman's whim;
Wesley his hands on Coke hath laid,
But who laid hands on him?'

"The shaft penetrated. Dr. Beardsley tells us that after Wesley's death, in 1791, Coke, who was a graduate of Oxford, applied to Bishops Seabury and White to impart the apostolical succession to himself and Aston; and not obtaining his request, returned to England and publicly recanted his schism." (Pp. 310, 311.)

The reader will perceive that there are several grave charges against Dr. Coke in the above extract. He is accused of duplicity and hypocrisy. Doubting the validity of his ordination by Mr. Wesley, he applies to Bishops White and Seabury for the "apostolical succession." Failing to obtain his request, he returns to England and openly recants "his schism," and publishes his recantation as widely as possible, but continues, nevertheless, to act as a bishop in the Methodist Episcopal Church in America for many years.

Having read these misrepresentations of Dr. Coke in the *Review*, I sent to London for a copy of Dr. Beardsley's book, in order that I might see whether the statements of *The Church Review* were authorized by Dr. Beardsley's work. On receipt of the volume it was apparent that the English writer had only echoed the accusations of the American biographer. Desiring to act with kindness and with prudence at the same time, I copied the offensive paragraph in the "Life of Seabury," inclosed it in a letter to Dr. Beardsley, and requested him to furnish me with the authority upon which his statements were founded.

I was aware that Dr. Coke's letter to Dr. White had furnished an occasion for the charge that Dr. Coke was at one period of his career in a state of disquietude and doubt concerning the validity of his ordination by Mr. Wesley. The circumstances connected with the first publication of that famous letter were familiar enough, but it would seem to be a sufficient settlement of *that* question, when Dr. Coke in 1808 solemnly affirmed that he had never for a moment entertained a doubt about the validity of his ordination. The language used in the letter to Dr. White was consistent with Dr. Coke's denial of the construction placed upon it, and ordinary courtesy requires that the veracity of a man shall not be called in question on the basis of equivocal or ambiguous terms of speech.

But never before, to my knowledge, has the charge of palpable duplicity been brought against Dr. Coke. He might have entertained doubts of his episcopal ordination—such doubts as Dr. Ives, Bishop of the Protestant Episcopal Diocese of North Carolina, confesses that he entertained for years whilst he exercised the episcopal office in his Church; but these doubts in the case of Dr. Coke, we are informed by Dr. Beardsley, led to the recantation of his work in America, and this recantation was made immediately after his return to Europe in 1791, and yet we find Dr. Coke exercising the office of a bishop in America in 1792! He presided in the American Conferences as often as opportunity served, and continued so to do until at the request of the British Conference he was permitted by the General Conference of 1808 to reside in Europe. That this conduct was inconsistent with common honesty is a very plain proposition.

In reply to the question as to his authority for making this statement, Dr. Beardsley referred me, in his courteous reply, to Dr. Coke's letter to Dr. Seabury, written in 1791. That letter I had never seen in print, but I was informed that it was contained in a volume entitled "Fac-similes of Church Documents." This volume had been issued only for private circulation, and it was several weeks before I succeeded in obtaining a copy of it. The letter of Dr. Coke to Dr. Seabury now appears in print for the first time. I submit the question to the reader whether the charges made by the author of the "Life of Seabury," and echoed by *The Church Review*, are sustained by the authority cited.

The reputation of Dr. Coke is the common property of all the branches of Methodism. His errors we do not seek to extenuate, but we cannot suffer a blot to be placed upon his name. His career was an illustrious one; his hand turned the key in the lock of the treasure-house of the gospel, and through the newly opened door the missionaries of the cross have entered, bearing the riches of divine truth to the neglected Africans of the West and the dusky heathens of the East Indies. He became the key-stone in the arch of American Methodism, whose beauty and strength have extorted admiration from the lips of its foes.

The author must be permitted to say that whatever of censure or severity these pages may contain must be understood as applying solely to the spirit of religious bigotry. To be a true Methodist one cannot fail to recognize the image of the Lord Jesus in every pious heart of every name and order. "If thy heart be as my heart, give me thy hand." Party names can-

not divide the people of the Lord; and the venerable founder of Methodism has left upon the record this watch-word for his followers. The liberty we claim, we allow to others. No exclusive test of doctrine or discipline has marred the symmetry of the Christian charity that forms the only bond of union in the militant Church.

That the spirit of intolerance has lost its influence in the multiplied sects of Christendom we are inclined to believe, and that it will soon disappear to return no more is the happy prophecy of the world's redemption from sin and sorrow; but the charity we entertain for others must coëxist with the determination to vindicate ourselves whenever the occasion arises, and the assailant proves to be "a foeman worthy of our steel." Aggression must be met by manly defense, for craven submission to wrong is a betrayal of the truth. In the communion of that people whose cause is injured by the prelatical assumptions of a few, there are multitudes of men and women who are "the salt of the earth." For them there are no words of censure or criticism in these pages.

The language of an eloquent historian of Virginia—John Esten Cooke—will present the contrast which the reader will find in this volume. "What the Church had lost was the impure blood," says Mr. Cooke, speaking of the Episcopal Church in Virginia, "and it rose purified and invigorated. The great and good man who had cried to it, 'Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead!' gave his own impress to it from that time forward. It had once been intolerant, and many of its ministers had not been exemplary people; in the future it was to be the most tolerant of

all communions, and its clergy were to be models of piety and self-sacrifice. This is the character of the Church to-day. It is so liberal in spirit that in certain other dioceses it is scarcely recognized as an 'Episcopal Church' at all. No criticism could be more welcome. It is to say that the Episcopal Church of Virginia is not cursed with a spirit of narrow sectarianism, is evangelical." *

In this we rejoice, and its prosperity and progress will cheer the hearts of all true Christians of every name. On the other hand, from the pages of the same number of *The Church Review* that contains the charges against Dr. Thomas Coke, it affords me pleasure to extract the following noble tribute:

"In the history of religious movements there is nothing more remarkable than the rise and progress of Methodism. One hundred and fifty years ago John Wesley had not begun his great work of evangelization in this country; yet to-day there is not a single quarter of the globe where, in some form or other, the influence of that work is not manifestly felt.

"At the time of Wesley's death, in 1791, Methodism could reckon three hundred and twelve preachers and seventy-nine thousand members. This in itself was no insignificant result of the work of one man—for the work of one man it was. Far beyond Charles Wesley or George Whitefield, John Wesley had been the leader and inspirer of the eighteenth century revival. He was perhaps the greatest religious organizer that ever lived. With a firm and intelligent grasp of practical principles he united a perfect knowledge and mastery of details. Every thing went through

* History of the People of Virginia, p. 396.

his own hands. The supreme power he reserved to himself throughout. By his marvelous genius, his commanding personal character, his far-sighted judgment, and his prompt decisiveness, he brought all his fellow-workers into complete subordination to himself, and kept them, for the most part, obedient to his will. Hence, his death was like the removal of the 'driving-wheel' from the machinery. The controlling and inspiring human power was gone.

"It was confidently predicted by the observers of the time that with the removal of this 'calmly fervent spirit,' the very heart and head of the new movement, the gradual decline of 'the societies' would set in; but the prophet did not prove to be amongst 'the men who know.' The spread of Methodism since Wesley's death has been greater and more astonishing than its growth during his life-time. At first the Conference was evidently ill prepared and little fitted to use the great power which had been bequeathed to it. Those who intimately know Methodist history during the first ten years after Wesley's death—especially as it is preserved in pamphlets and letters—can only marvel that, amid the personal ambitions and petty jealousies of some of its principal men, it did not go to pieces. But the perilous trials of that period, as of some more recent years, were safely passed through. From town to town in our own land, from one people to another in Asia, Africa, and America, the teaching of Wesley has been carried, until the 'General Statistics of Methodism' now report over thirty-one thousand ministers, more than four million and a half of members, and altogether nearly twenty millions of people who are in some way or other under the direct

influence of Methodist teaching. A community so numerous, so rapidly developed, so thoroughly organized, and extending its influence into all quarters of the globe, is a potent factor in the modern religious life of the world."

These words might have formed an appropriate rear-guard in my army of defense; but as I am not in retreat, I have chosen to place them in the front of the battle.

THE AUTHOR.

Nashville, Tenn., January, 1886.

The High-churchman Disarmed.

(13)

Chapter I.

The Statue of Gold—Friends and Foes of Religious Liberty—Owen, Roger Williams—Queen Elizabeth in favor of Coercion—Leonard Busher—John Calvin—William the Silent—John Goodwin—Edwards's Gangrena—Prynne—Simpson—John Milton—James Arminius.

TO the Christian moralist there is no reflection more humiliating than that which is suggested by the question of the liberty of conscience. That any man, or set of men, could deliberately justify the taking of human life as a penalty for difference of opinion upon religious subjects, would appear to us incredible, if it were not demonstrated in the bloody history of fifteen centuries. Persecution is not the weapon of a sect or a party, but of all sects and parties in power up to a late period in modern history.

Precisely when and where and why the intolerance of bigotry has given way to mildness and charity is an inquiry that has been variously answered. Individuals of all sects have been advocates of toleration in matters of opinion, but they have usually been those who had no power to persecute, or those who were disqualified for acts of cruelty by natural temperament.

It has been said that the pioneer in the direction of complete toleration, or of perfect liberty of conscience in religion, deserves to have in every thoroughfare in Christendom a statue of gold erected to his memory. To whom would the statue belong? To what man among rulers, to what princely spirit among religious teachers?

"To the Brownists are to be ascribed the first correct views of religious liberty; and from them and the Baptist and Pedobaptist Independents who sprung from them, every thing that appeared on this topic for many years came."*

This is the language of Mr. Orme, who does not hesitate to claim for his hero undoubted preëminence on the one hand, and precedence in the order of time on the other. Fortunately the records are abundant, and we shall have no difficulty in making comparisons of dates, and principles as well. The same author who attributes to Dr. Owen, the Independent, the leadership among Christian teachers, makes the following statement concerning Roger Williams, of Rhode Island: "This gentleman obtained the first charter for the State of New Providence, of which he was constituted Governor; and to his honor it deserves to be recorded that he was the first *Governor* who ever pleaded that liberty of conscience was the birthright of man, and granted it to those who differed from himself, when he had the power of withholding it."†

Savage, in his edition of Winthrop's Works, calls Roger Williams the "earliest assertor of religious freedom."‡ The character of this singular man requires patient study and a competent knowledge of the times in which he lived, if we propose to justify the lofty praises which have been bestowed upon him. That he displayed a spirit of *intolerance* while he remained in the colonies of Plymouth and Massachusetts Bay is beyond question. That he permitted individuals of all creeds and professions to settle in the

* Orme's *Life of Dr. John Owen*, p. 99. † *Ibid.*, p. 100. ‡ *Memoir of Roger Williams*, by J. D. Knowles, p. x., *note*.

"Plantation" of New Providence is equally true. But his forbearance and patience must be read through the lights of the age in which he lived. No man in the nineteenth century, following in the footsteps of Roger Williams, would be called a believer in the sovereignty of the religious conscience. Without entering upon a discussion at this point, it will be seen presently that a greater man than the founder of Rhode Island had proclaimed and practiced perfect toleration of religious opinions twenty years before Roger Williams was born.

The enemies of religious liberty form a strange medley.

"To allow Churches with contrary rites and ceremonies," said Queen Elizabeth, "were nothing else but to sow religion out of religion, to distract good men's minds, to cherish factious men's humors, to disturb religion and commonwealth, and mingle divine and human things, which were a thing indeed evil, in example worst of all; to our own subjects hurtful, and to themselves to whom it is granted, neither greatly commodious nor yet at all safe." *

The student of that period's history will be slow to condemn the Queen in this judgment. If ever there existed a necessity for some protecting hand to guide the Church through the elements of doctrinal chaos, it was needed at the close of the sixteenth and the beginning of the seventeenth century. Never was such diversity of opinion in matters of religion, for there was never before in the history of the Church, such a wonderful disposition to search the Scriptures and to expound the word of life. Within a period of sixty

* Motley's *United Netherlands*, Vol. I., p. 26.

years, embracing the last days of Elizabeth and the close of the Commonwealth, there were published more than seven thousand distinct works expository of the Holy Scriptures. The catalogue of these books, prepared at the end of 1665, shows a mass of matter exceeding twenty thousand volumes, all of which comprised the nature of *commentaries* upon the Bible. Every man who could read Greek made a translation of the New Testament. Many thousands wrote in sublime ignorance of the original tongues, but with more or less acuteness and intelligence. One of these works devotes four volumes 8vo to a single verse of the New Testament!

We can readily see that the public taste which permitted to prince and peasant alike the privilege of standing as an expounder of the truth of God must call forth the worst, as well as the best, passions of the human heart. Limited knowledge promotes bigotry. Facility for the propagation of strange, uncouth, and surprising opinions must tend to increase the number of such books, and to confirm the discords of authorship, as well as the jarring ambitions of aspiring men of high and low degree. But was persecution—the jibbet, the stake, and the dungeon, no less than civil disabilities, and deprivation of property and personal liberty—was the hard hand of *repression* essential to the prevalence of truth? We say *now*, it can never be; but who can satisfy himself that he would not have applauded the sentiments of Queen Elizabeth if he had been one of her subjects three hundred years ago?

But whatever may be said as to the *principle* of toleration, it is certain that no nation in the world was

prepared to practice this doctrine in the sixteenth century. No man possessed a more tender, charitable spirit than Thomas Cranmer, but he gave his consent to consign the bodies of his fellow-creatures to the flames because they held opinions at war with his views of the gospel. John Calvin, of all men in that age, ought to have shown, in his commonwealth of Geneva, an example of liberality and generosity; but he not only consented to the persecution of Servetus, but was the chief instrument in the capture, conviction, and execution of the unfortunate Socinian.* Melancthon justified the act of Calvin; and while the Pope of Rome was jubilant over the murder of fifty thousand Protestants on St. Bartholomew's day, the godly men of the Church of England had no words of reproof for the man who had helped to murder a poor heretic in Switzerland. Alas! the truth bears a sad face, and we turn away in disgust.

But I have promised to show that a greater man than Roger Williams preceded him in advocating religious liberty. That stalwart figure in European history—the man whose greatness grows as the years recede from the period which he honored as no man of any age has honored his time and country—the majestic form of William the Silent, Prince of Orange, rises before us as the ruler whose claims to immortality of praise no just man can withhold.

“He resolutely stood out against all meddling with men's consciences or inquiring into their thoughts. While smiting the Spanish Inquisition into the dust, he would have no Calvinist Inquisition set up in its stead. Earnestly a convert to the reformed religion,

* Life of Servetus, p. 122.

but hating and denouncing only what was corrupt in the ancient Church, he would not force men with fire and sword to travel to heaven upon his own road. Thought should be toll-free. Neither monk nor minister should burn, drown, or hang his fellow-creatures when argument or expostulation failed to redeem them from error." *

In a social state whose perils were as great as those that threatened civilization in England, and at the same point of time, the Prince of Orange granted liberty to his deadly foes, and while he stood forth an advocate of religious freedom, the dagger of a Romanist bigot ended his career! He refused to oppress his fellow-men for conscience' sake, and the conscience of a fanatic exacted his life as a penalty for this charitable indulgence! Thus the pages of history reveal to us the roll of honor, on whose list appears the name of William, Prince of Orange, the first and greatest of rulers who have avowed and practiced the doctrine of soul-liberty. Roger Williams was born in 1599, William the Silent was murdered in 1583. Roger Williams declared for liberty of conscience in 1636; the Prince of Orange more than fifty years before. Roger Williams had one hundred and five men in his colony capable of bearing arms; the Prince of Orange had one city that sent to the battle-field eighty thousand men. Can we hesitate as to the priority or grade of merit presented in these cases?

Justice to all parties requires an examination of the dates which record the various publications advocating religious toleration. In 1614 Leonard Busher, an Independent, published a tract entitled "A Plea for

* Motley's *Rise of the Dutch Republic*, Vol. III., p. 62.

Liberty of Conscience."* This is the first publication whose date is clearly defined. Antecedent to this work of Busher, there is nothing claimed in behalf of the British Independents. Their record at the beginning of the century is altogether the other way. As the conduct of King Charles gradually revealed his utter incompetency for the high position which he held, the Episcopalians decreased in Parliament, and the Presbyterian and Independent parties became formidable. By their union they overthrew Episcopacy without establishing either of the opposing forms of Church government.

The Presbyterians were clamorous for compulsory conformity to the worship of the Church of England, as it had been changed by the Westminster Assembly. Cromwell saw his opportunity, in balancing the rival sects against each other without giving a positive decision in favor of either. Presbyterians were dissatisfied, and Independents as greatly displeased. No test had been made to determine the strength of the contending parties, and thus the disorders of the Church kept pace with the anomalous condition of the State. During this period some of those who had suffered most by the hand of persecution were desirous of payment in kind, exacting in turn civil and personal penalties from those who had robbed, imprisoned, and maimed the now triumphant sectaries. Prynne, a lawyer who had lost both of his ears by the executioner, and had suffered the most degrading and humiliating punishments under the tyranny of Laud and his party, was now a blatant advocate for persecution by the Presbyterian authorities.† His book was en-

* Life of Owen, p. 99. † Jackson's Life of Goodwin, p. 110.

titled, "The Sword of Christian Magistracy Supported; or A Full Vindication of Christian Kings' and Magistrates' Authority under the Gospel to punish Idolatry, Apostasy, Heresy, Blasphemy, and obstinate Schism, with Corporeal, and in Some Cases, with Capital Punishment. 1647." Surely this man ought to have known the horrible consequences of persecution for opinion's sake. But he did not see that the same arguments which justified him in branding the cheeks of a heretic justified Archbishop Laud in cropping the ears of a troublesome and heretical lawyer! Laud's "truth" was as dear to him as a Church of England bishop, as Prynne's "truth" was to him as a Presbyterian layman. The "conscience" of neither has vantage-ground against the other, and thus both were right or both were wrong. Which of these propositions formulates the truth, modern civilization declares with no uncertain voice.

The Rev David Simpson, in his "Plea for Religion,"* declares that Dr. Owen was the first writer who wrote in favor of toleration, and he gives the date of 1648. "Milton followed him about the year 1658, in his 'Treatise of the Civil Power in Ecclesiastical Causes.' And the immortal Locke followed them both with his golden 'Treatise on Toleration,' in 1689." The acquaintance of Mr. Simpson with the literature of that period does not appear to be extensive or exact. It is capable of proof that John Goodwin, as early as 1644, in the *second* edition of his reply to Dr. Adam Stewart, declared openly for liberty of conscience.† The times required, as perhaps all times will require, that religious toleration should be de-

* Simpson's *Plea*, p. 202. † Jackson's *Life of Goodwin*, p. 122.

fined. If a Mormon resolves to make polygamy a part of his religion, we are not required to tolerate his conscience at the expense of public morality. If a heresiarch like Joe Smith should attempt to make *thiering* a principle of his religion, we are not required to defend him in his defiance of common honesty. It may be difficult to define the exact limits of religious principles, and to draw the line which separates liberty from licentiousness. The peace of the community, obedience to civil law, and the supreme welfare of the State, will seldom be enveloped in doubts which the intelligence of the age cannot remove. Thus, Mr. Goodwin's proviso to unlimited toleration required that the protected parties should be "peaceable in the State, and every way subject to the laws and lawful power of the magistrate."

In 1646 an ordinance was proposed in Parliament for the "Punishing of Heresies and Blasphemies." Mr. Goodwin immediately published "Some Modest and Humble Queries concerning a late Printed Paper," etc. In this tract the author propounded a number of questions, which contain the soul and essence of religious toleration. The publication of this small work was the occasion of the most remarkable production which religious controversy has ever known. One Edwards, a Presbyterian fanatic, published a work entitled "Gangrena," in reply to Goodwin. In this work Edwards calls the tract of his opponent "a desperate, ungodly, atheistical piece." "I have had occasion to read many discourses and tractates," he says, "that have been writ within the last hundred years; and have seen much wickedness in them, both in those of other countries and our own; especially those written

and newly printed within five years last past; but in none of them do I find such a spirit of libertinism, atheism, profaneness, and laying waste of all religion, breathing as in those *Queries*." He declares John Goodwin to be the prince of heretics, worse than Socinus himself, and declares: "I do not think it lawful for Christians to receive such a one into their house, or to bid him Godspeed; but rather, if they come where he is, to fly from him." The name of Goodwin he proposes to make "an abhorring to future generations."

That we may see of what materials an argument against charity, meekness, temperance, and brotherly love can be framed, this paragraph is instructive:

"A toleration is the grand design of the devil—his master-piece, and chief engine he works by at this time to uphold his tottering kingdom. As original sin is the most fundamental sin, having the seed and spawn of all sin in it; so a toleration bath all errors in it and all evils. It is against the whole stream and current of Scripture, both in the Old and New Testament; both in matters of faith and manners; both general and particular commands. It overthrows all relations political, ecclesiastical, and economical; and whereas other evils, whether of judgment or practice, be but against some one or two places of Scripture or relation, this is against all—this is the Abaddon, Apollyon, the destroyer of all religion, the abomination of desolation and astonishment, the liberty of perdition, and therefore the devil follows it night and day, working mightily in many by writing books for it, and other ways; all the devils in hell, and their instruments, being at work to promote a toleration."*

* *Edward's Gangrena*, in *Life of Owen*, p. 43.

When liberty of conscience is branded as the offspring of Satan, we cannot wonder at the savage epithets applied to John Goodwin by this madman. As Presbyterianism declined in power, Edwards, fearing the exercise of his own doctrine in the hands of those whom he had injured, fled to Holland and died there. It is not a little singular, however, that Mr. Orme, the biographer of Owen, whilst he notices the venomous character of the book of Edwards, gives no hint that the "*Gangrena*" was written in reply to John Goodwin's treatise in favor of toleration. The dates will show that Goodwin preceded Owen in advocating toleration; that Goodwin was in favor of full, complete liberty of conscience. while Owen's approach to that doctrine was through slow and toilsome years of progress; and finally, that Goodwin began where Owen ended. The reason of Mr. Orme's partiality is revealed in a few words: John Goodwin was an Arminian, and John Owen was a Calvinist!

The caustic sonnet of Milton was written about this time, and made no little stir. The great poet had not then lost his eyesight,* and he who had ventured all things in opposition to the tyranny of a king was not disposed to acquiesce in the despotism of a party:

"Men whose life, learning, faith, and pure intent
Would have been held in high esteem with Paul,
Must now be named and printed Heretics
By shallow Edwards and Scotch what d'ye call;
But we do hope to find out all your tricks,
Your plots and packing worse than those of Trent,
That so the Parliament
May with their wholesome and preventive shears
Clip your phylacteries, though bank your ears,
And succor our just fears,

When they shall read this clearly in your charge,
New Presbyter is but Old Priest writ large."*

Whether Milton in these lines referred to the clipping of Prynne's ears does not appear; but it is probable, as that enthusiast was not the least among the advocates of persecution. But men who could remain oblivious to the plainest dictates of reason could meet the shafts of a poet's keenest wit. As Prynne had no ears, it was not expected that *he* should hear; but the men of Parliament had not been deprived of hearing, but of sense. They prohibited the use of the Book of Common Prayer, not in public only, but in family worship; the penalty being five pounds for the first offense, ten for the second, and for the third a year's imprisonment, without bail or main-prize.† Absurdities like these vain efforts to regulate by Act of Parliament the communion of the human soul with its Father in heaven invariably strengthen the cause they are intended to destroy.

We have traced the earliest declaration in behalf of toleration to Leonard Busher, in the year 1614. There remains the inquiry whether the champions of Protestantism can produce no earlier advocacy of a principle which appears to us to be fundamental in the system of Christianity. If this advocate can be found, it will be among the brave defenders of civil liberty whose long struggle for the rights of man furnishes one of the brightest chapters in human history. We turn our eyes instinctively to Holland, and the first suggested name is that of James Arminius.

On the 8th of February, 1606, James Arminius resigned the office of Rector of the University of Ley-

* New Forces of Conscience. † Life of Goodwin, p. 116.

den. This step was, upon his part, a peace measure. He had withdrawn his pupils from the useless study of scholastic disputations, and had directed their attention to the sacred Scriptures as the source and fountain of all religious truth; but his views concerning the predestination of the human soul were not palatable to some of those who were in places of distinction, and especially to one of the professors. Arminius was not a promoter of strife and contention. Patient inquiry into the truth as it is given to men in the Bible had caused him to forsake the doctrine of the Calvinists. He could not dissemble, and he must declare his opinions or resign his post. He preferred to do the latter; and upon his retirement he delivered an oration "on reconciling religious dissensions among Christians." This address was prompted by a loving, brotherly spirit, and it was delivered with the purpose, but scarcely with the hope, of softening the dispositions of his opponents, and moderating the heats of controversy. This admirable address has shared the fate of many other writings of its author. Arminius was anxious to bring his fellow-men into accord and harmony, persuading them to agree upon mutual toleration of errors where actual agreement of opinions was impossible. Because he desired this he has been represented as foolishly striving to bring all men under one profession of faith into one Church. Persecutors in every age have professed to enterprise this very thing, and yet they have held up to ridicule the name of Arminius for attempting it. Unless it is a desire for bloody exhibitions to gratify a native cruelty, for what purpose are compulsory laws for "conformity" enacted? To make all men see "eye to eye,"

and take their places side by side in the militant Church of Christ! Therefore to do this, to promote union, those who refuse to think and believe according to Act of Parliament must be fined, imprisoned, or burned at the stake, for the love of God and the good of the souls of men!

In reading this address of Arminius, the greatness of his intellect appears in rivalry with the goodness of his heart. He probes the question to the bottom, and leaves no essential feature unexamined. He begins with the blessing of Divine Providence which has given to his hearers the blessed light of the gospel. Untrammelled, unhindered, every man may see the truth and walk in the way of life. On the other hand, as blessings and evils attend each other, human ignorance has obscured the light of the holy word of God. Errors dark and deadly arise, and fill the path to heaven with dangerous snares and pitfalls. Advocacy of men's opinions creates enthusiasm for what is believed to be true, and soon dissensions, strifes, divisions appear, and the hearts of men receive the poison of prejudice, malice, and evil works without number. The Church of the *reformed* becomes thus the assembly of the *deformed*—the jest, the taunt, the witticism of foes among the adherents of Rome, and the sport of those who have no creed and desire none. "I cannot dissemble the intense grief which I feel at my heart," he exclaims, "on account of that religious discord which has been festering like a gangrene, and pervading the whole of Christianity!"

Union is a great good. It is made more manifest by contrast with the evils of discord and disunion that surround us. The capacity for religion distinguishes

man from the brutes; and it is marvelous that the system which ought to unite all souls to each other, and to God the Father of all, should become the occasion of placing men in hostility to each other, and by this means alienating all from the love and communion of the God of peace and concord. The tendency of this state of things does not exhaust itself with the diffusion of discord and bitterness among the parties to the strife; beyond the limits of the struggling contestants there are spectators who are tempted to reject all doctrines and to despise all professions, and thus to repudiate the Christian religion as the product of evil, and not the offspring of a Being infinitely wise and good. Thus infidels are made by the bitterness and enmities of misguided men.

For these evils, which are pictured at full length and in formidable proportions, the orator has a remedy. It would lead the mind to despair, if no remedy were within sight. He proposes a council of the Churches. To this body the wisest, the best of representatives should be appointed, at the call of the recognized authorities of the State. Over this body, representing all shades of opinion, all degrees of faith and unfaith as these may be accepted or rejected by different classes of men, he proposes a president, appointed by the highest civil officer, or elected by the body itself.

In this august assembly every party, every grade of opinion must receive exact justice. Over the door of this council-hall he would engrave these words: "Let no one that is not desirous of promoting the interests of truth and peace enter this hallowed dome!" In the spirit of prayer and supplication to the Great Head of the

Church these Christians in council are to seek a common ground of faith and practice. Having agreed upon the symbols which they are prepared to accept and defend, it will follow that the conclusion has failed of unanimity. What then? Shall the hand of power compel the *profession* of unanimity when reason and argument have failed to produce agreement in opinion? The tendencies which in the nature of the case lead to such a result Arminius sets forth in forcible terms:

“All these enmities, schisms, persecutions, and wars are commenced, carried on, and conducted with the greater animosity on account of every one considering his adversary as the most infectious and pestilential fellow in the whole Christian world; a public incendiary, a murderer of souls, an enemy of God, and a servant of the devil; as a person who deserves to be suddenly smitten and consumed by fire descending from heaven; and as one whom it is not only lawful to hate, to curse, and to murder, without incurring any guilt, but whom it is also highly proper to treat in that manner, and to be entitled to no slight commendation for such a service, because no other work appears in his eyes to be more acceptable to God, of greater utility in the salvation of man, more odious to Satan, or more pernicious to his kingdom. Such a sanguinary zealot professes to be invited, instigated, and constrained to deeds like these by a zeal for the house of God, for the salvation of men, and for the divine glory. This conduct of violent partisans is what was predicted by the Judge and the Master of our religion: ‘When they shall persecute you, and kill you for my sake, they will think that they do God service.’ (John xvi.

2.) When the very conscience, therefore, arouses, assists, and defends the affections, no obstacle can offer a successful resistance to their impetuosity. Thus we see that religion itself, through the vicious corruption of men, has been made a cause of dissension, and has become the field in which they may perpetually exercise themselves in cruel and bloody contests." *

But the soul of the humane professor revolts at the spectacle of Christians destroying each other for the sake of Christianity. He exhorts his hearers to a higher and nobler method of triumphing over error of every grade and species. He has prepared the way for a solution of the problem, if any solution can be obtained. If not, to God and the future all issues and all results must be piously committed. But no synopsis will supply the place of one of the concluding paragraphs of this remarkable address:

"But the Synod will not assume to itself the authority of obtruding upon others by force those resolutions which have been passed by unanimous consent. For this reflection should always suggest itself: 'Though this Synod appears to have done all things conscientiously, it is possible that after all it has committed an error in judgment.' Such a diffidence and moderation of mind will possess greater power, and will have more influence, than any immoderate or excessive rigor can have, on the consciences both of the contumacious dissidents and of the whole body of the faithful; because, according to Lactantius, 'to recommend faith to others, we must make it the subject of persuasion and not of compulsion.' Tertullian also says, 'Nothing is less a religious business than to em-

* Works of Arminius, Vol. I., p. 160.

ploy coercion about religion.' For these disturbers will either then (1) desist from creating further trouble to the Church by the frequent, unreasonable, and outrageous inculcation of their opinions, which with all their powers of persuasion they were not able to prevail with such a numerous assembly of impartial and moderate men to adopt. Or, (2) being exposed to the just indignation of all these individuals, they will scarcely find a person willing to lend an ear to teachers of such a refractory and obstinate disposition. If this should not prove to be the result, then it must be concluded that there are no remedies calculated to remove all evils; but those must be employed which have in them the least peril. The mild and affectionate exhortation of Christ our Saviour must also live in our recollections. He addressed his disciples and said, 'Will ye also go away?' (John vi. 67.) We must use the same interrogation, *and must rest at that point, and cease from all ulterior measures.*" *

Thus we have an argument and a plea for toleration which cannot be paralleled except in the pages of the Holy Bible. The Spirit of Christianity, of Jesus, the divine Author of our religion, breathes in every sentence, in every line. He would bring all men to agreement if possible. Failing in this, he would treat the most troublesome sectaries, the most persistent disturbers of peace and harmony, with kindness; and failing to conciliate by kindness irreconcilable elements of antagonism, he would repose the truth of God on the bosom, and in the words of Jesus the Lord, and then rest the case for time and eternity!

Let us recall the dates. Leonard Busher in 1614,

* Works of Arminius, Vol. I., pp. 189, 190.

James Arminius in 1606. The first a plea in feeble and ineffective terms from one under the ban of a civil and ecclesiastical government; the other the recognized superior of the society in which he moved, the friend and counselor of the highest civil officer in the State, and aware of the influence he possessed and the power which could be used to injure, if not to silence his enemies. Compare these environments, and with eight years priority of time, the eloquent exposition and defense of liberty of conscience will dictate to the candid and impartial world the name to be inscribed on the statue of gold: JAMES ARMINIUS.

Chapter II.

Organization of the Methodist Episcopal Church—Beginning of Christianity in Earnest—Church of England without Discipline—English Dissent—Defects of the Colonial Churches—Clerical Prizes—Absolute Equality in America—Fatal Results—Degradation of the Ministry—Methodism on Trial.

THE organization of the Methodist Episcopal Church in America forms an epoch in the history of Christianity. The year 1784 is the starting-point of a religious revival whose influence has been felt in every part of the civilized world.

Methodism, as an independent form of Church life, is coëval with the steam-engine. As a factor in the progress of the material forces of civilization the steam-engine has developed the latent powers of physical nature, and brought into exercise the long-neglected gifts of Providence. Methodism, as a purely religious force, has entered the field of the world, armed with the authority of Scripture, and inspired by the Great Head of the Church. Her objective-point is the conversion of the world to Christ, the Redeemer of men. To this end tribute is drawn from every class and condition of human society. For the man of learning there is a broad field of labor; for the illiterate man, who only knows the way to the cross, and the blessedness that is found in believing in Jesus, there is a narrower, but not the less important, post of duty.

Hemmed in by social restrictions, and trammelled

by customs, habits, and prejudices that dwarfed and stunted the spiritual life of its converts, Methodism in Europe struggled into prominence and power, but could not develop into the fullness and strength of a thoroughly furnished Church of Christ during the life-time of its founder. Mr. Wesley was a man of great wisdom, but he was not infallible. He could not foresee that separation from the Church of England was essential to the success of the gospel which he had taught to his followers. In vain did he strive to put the new wine of the kingdom of Christ into the old bottles of a Church that had served the Providential purposes of its organization. As a State institution the Church of England has been for two centuries the defender of the Protestant faith among the kingdoms of Europe. But this high and honorable office was not the reward of a victory won by her bishops and clergy. The strong dissenting element of the nation caused the revolution that gave to Parliament the final decision in the struggle for the throne. It was not the Archbishop of Canterbury and his episcopal brethren who decreed that no Catholic prince should occupy the throne of Great Britain. It was the voice of the people, the voice of patriotic dissenters and of Churchmen antagonizing the sentiment of their clergy that forever banished the sectaries of Rome from the high places of power.

The Church of England was placed in the van of Protestant establishments, and has been kept there by the pressure from beyond, and not by the forces within her borders. If for a generation this pressure should be relaxed, the theories and tendencies of Puseyism would retrace the progress of centuries, and

bring the English people back to the faith and practice of the Dark Ages.

It is this conservative force of English dissent, united with the rival influences of English Methodism, that has formed a distinctive religious character for the Church of England. What is an army without discipline? If disobedience to orders incurs no penalty, what troop of soldiers would follow their officers into the "imminent deadly breach?" If the declared penalty of violated law is never enforced, how long would any species of law remain the rule of moral action? But the Church of England has no system of discipline. Practically she has none for her ministers; confessedly there is none for her members. Excommunication from the Church is such a heavy punishment that it is never inflicted. A clergyman may commit any species of immorality short of a felony, without losing his clerical character. In extreme cases only is a delinquent deposed from the ministry. Private members have no standard of religious character. No man feels the restraining influence of the Church as a force modeling his character or helping him to govern himself. Public opinion has its code of morals, binding on the man of honor, or the man of the world, but the member of the Church has no standard by which he can test his own actions, and determine questions of right and wrong in his own personal experience.

This lack of discipline is not merely a serious defect, it is a fatal weakness. The absence of a scriptural standard of moral action subjects the Churchman to many evils which the advocates of dissent have escaped. As there is no standard of moral ac-

tion, there is no moral sentiment that can be confidently proclaimed as the voice of the Church. The absence of penalties of any kind proves the absence of principles, and the religious character of Churchmen becomes the product of public opinion outside of the Church itself, or it ceases to be a religious character at all.

It was precisely at this point that the work of Mr. Wesley began. He did not propose to reform the doctrines of the Church of England, for he believed himself to be in full accord with them. He did not propose to organize a new Church, for he saw nothing essentially defective in the outward order and organization of the national Church. He proposed to give to the Church a system of religious discipline by which the life of religion would be preserved when it was obtained. Therefore his "societies" were under as thorough regimen as the soldiers of an army. He who would not obey must cease to hinder. He did not hesitate to exclude any one from fellowship for the mere *omission* of duty. He proposed to introduce this spirit of order and obedience into the body of the Church, until the public opinion of the ecclesiastical body would exact conformity to the Bible standard. It will be readily acknowledged that a reformation of this kind is not palatable to our corrupt human nature. To introduce rigid rules of holy living, and to admit or exclude men from the kingdom of heaven according as they have kept or violated these rules, is a labor for which men will never thank their benefactors. A reformation based upon morals alone will arouse more formidable foes than those that confronted Luther and Calvin. Therefore, Mr. Wesley lived and

died nobly battling in a hopeless cause; but not without his reward. The end is not yet. He lived not to see the Church of England reformed, but he gave to the Church, to his followers, and to the age, the legacy of a great moral and religious awakening that will never cease to grow and strengthen until the great day of final awards.

In America Methodism had no narrow limits proposed for her aggressive movements. The various Episcopal bodies existing in the colonies had no organic connection with each other. Certain ministers who received their ministerial orders from the Church of England were recognized as pastors of the "establishment" in Maryland and Virginia; but in neither of these colonies was there any thing resembling a convocation, a synod, or assembly of ministers. There was no form of union among them, and therefore there was no substance of Church unity. By a sort of tradition the Bishop of London was regarded as having ecclesiastical jurisdiction in the colonies; but there was no law for this government of the colonies by the Bishop of London or by any other bishop in England.* The whole question of religious life and manners in the colonies had been eliminated from the schedules of English statesmen, for obvious reasons. But in those colonies that tolerated something resembling the Church of England there was the same fatal weakness, the absence of Church discipline.

In the Church of England there existed a moral sentiment which sustained the *esprit du corps* of the clerical body. This moral sentiment was not wholly distinct from the religious life of the clergy, but it

* Maryland: History of a Palatinate, by Wm. Hand Browne, p. 192.

had its root in a human, but laudable, ambition. It was obviously true that a bishop should not be a drunkard, or a gambler, or a libertine. The proprieties of life would be violated, the religious sensibilities shocked, by a brazen display of irreligion in the high places of the Church. The moral power that provided restraints of this kind was based upon the fact that the political party in office could not afford to disgrace itself by unworthy appointments to the episcopal bench. But it was nevertheless true that neither the Whig nor the Tory party made these appointments without reference to the partisan influence of the persons chosen. If there were exceptions, they were very few. Ministers did not become bishops because they had served the Church, but because they had served the party, faithfully. Men of distinction in the walks of literature were often rewarded by lucrative places, but there were few instances of betterments bestowed upon men who could claim nothing else besides a burning zeal for the salvation of souls.

There *were* places of preferment, however, and stations of great honor, and offices whose salaries were objects of ambitious effort. This fact preserved the Church of England from intellectual decadence, and placed the profession of the ministry among the foremost pursuits of the middle classes in England. The learned Dr. Bentley, as far back as 1713, called attention to this feature of the English Establishment. There were six thousand clergymen at that time, whose salaries averaged only fifty pounds per annum. He affirmed that the existence of a few "high prizes" in the Church—in the prebends, deaneries, and bishoprics—kept the clergy from becoming as ignorant and

worthless as the monks of the Dark Ages. "Do but once level all your preferments," says Bentley, "and you'll soon be as level in your learning."* The wisdom couched in these few words is forcibly illustrated by the colonial churches.

In America there was an absolute equality of clerical positions in the Church. There were no prebends, no deaneries, no bishoprics. By the laws of Virginia and Maryland, the salaries of the incumbents of parishes were fixed, and all placed upon a level. No talents of the preacher, no faithfulness of the rector, no zeal upon the part of the minister, could augment, and no lack of these could diminish, the stipend allowed by law. The natural consequence followed this arrangement—ministers had no motive for self-cultivation. There were no positions in society open to them, and none in the Church higher than those they occupied. Stagnation of the intellect was the result, and must ever be under similar circumstances. Ministers are human, and while the highest and purest motive of ministerial action must be the salvation of the souls committed to them, yet the very nature of man requires that the expenditure of labor and effort should be recompensed by some adequate reward. Thus it happened, as foretold by Bentley—the intellect of the colonial clergy was "all on a level." There were few men of genius, few men of more than average abilities, and not a few instances of men of superior natural powers, who became inert and nerveless by reason of their surroundings.

The absence of intellectual stimulus to the ministry affected the pastors of the churches, but the absence

* Bentley: Remarks upon a Discourse of Free-thinking, p. 152.

of Church discipline concerned the whole body. By birth the Episcopalian was entitled to the initiatory rite of baptism, and by this rite he was made "a child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven." No confirmation was possible in adult age, because there were no bishops to administer the rite. All attempts to awaken the conscience by appeals which brought the Scripture doctrine of heart-conversion to view were opposed as the teachings of enthusiasm; and the single title of the average Churchman consisted in the record of his baptism in infancy. Various and contradictory opinions prevailed upon the subject of the Lord's Supper. Some regarded it with a mysterious awe little less superstitious than the Romanist entertains for the consecrated "host." Others did not scruple to partake of this solemn ordinance as a mere proof of loyalty to the reigning sovereign. Test acts had transformed a devout act of religion into the badge of a party and the qualification of an officeholder.

Meantime there was no religious character existing, either in the minister or the layman, as such. Piety in the minister was not an essential quality for his station, and the profession of piety was a rare, unique thing in a layman. The ministry led the way in popular amusements, and in the festivities of the wine-table, and the dissipations of the card-room. The prostitution of ministerial character was fearful. The testimony comes to us from too many sources to be denied, and there is scarcely room for the exercise of charitable doubts.

The Established clergy in Virginia, Mr. Jefferson tells us, were chiefly engaged in cultivating their farms

and teaching classical schools. Once a week a sermon was preached at the parish church, but other pastoral functions were little attended to.* Indifferent to the zeal and industry of the preachers among the "dissenters," because their own position was secured by law, they passed their days in heedless security, and were not aroused to a sense of their danger until they found two-thirds of the people in open revolt against the State Establishment.† For more than a century the Episcopalians had absolute and undisputed possession of the land, and under their religious dominion society was becoming worse. Not only did "the clergy" make no effort to elevate the moral and social standards of their people, but they opposed all those who labored for these ends. "In the progress of the several centuries which preceded this date," says one of the biographers of Thomas Jefferson, "the morals of the Established clergy had become a by-word and a disgrace to the Christian name. They were, in a majority of instances, drunken, idle, and debauched."‡ This censure may be too severe, but there are reasons to believe it altogether just.

"There is little reason to doubt that serious 'irregularities' did exist in the lives of many ministers," says John Esten Cooke. "They played cards, and hunted the fox, and indulged in drink; and what was even worse, they had small love for their neighbors, the dissenters."§ These are the words of one who had no motive to misrepresent the character of the Church with which his ancestors had been identified. If the state of

* Correspondence and Miscellanies of Thomas Jefferson, vol. i., p. 31. † Jefferson's Notes on Virginia, p. 308. ‡ Schmucker: Life and Times of Thomas Jefferson, p. 84. § History of Virginia, p. 332.

society was somewhat better in Maryland, it was due to the fact that the Episcopalians were never in a popular majority in that colony. It was a political and not a religious motive that procured the establishment of Episcopalianism in Maryland.* To prove that Catholics and dissenters could be loyal to the reigning house in England, the Church of the kingdom was complimented by placing Episcopalian ministers in charge of the religious interests of the colony. This was an experiment; and while it accomplished something as a measure of political sagacity, it was not attended by the moral declension that followed undisputed sway in Virginia.

The absence of a system of discipline in the Episcopal churches of the colonies formed a sufficient reason for the existence of the Methodists as an independent society. The administration of the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper was the only point of union between the colonial Methodists and their Episcopal brethren. In matters of doctrine they were not agreed. The most vital of all scriptural truths—the instantaneous conversion of the soul from the kingdom of Satan to the light and liberty of the children of God—was either directly denied or gravely questioned by the great majority of the clergy. Conscientious pardon of sin, positive knowledge of the divine favor in a spiritual change of heart, was openly denied, and all profession of this experience was branded with the fatal stigma of "enthusiasm." That a religious association could long exist inside of a Church whose ministry was hostile to the vital principle of Methodism, was simply impossible.

* Browne: *History of Maryland*, p. 189.

When the Methodist Episcopal Church was organized in 1784, the doctrines of Wesley had free course, and no jarring discords, no hindering forces, were to be found within the borders of the independent Church. The test of time and Providence was now to be applied to the new denomination. If its religious experience was merely "wild-fire," it would soon burn itself out, and leave the lifeless ashes of a foolish enthusiasm as a warning to others. If there was a true foundation for the plea of scriptural doctrines and real heart-experience, a free country, a free Church, a self-denying ministry, and a sincere flock of truth-seeking disciples would establish the fact in the sight of men and angels.

The verdict of history appears in the four millions of members and the position of American Methodism at the beginning of the second century of its existence.

Chapter III.

The Puritans of New England—Independents in Holland—A Sinless State—High-church Persecution—The American Episcopate—The Whig Controversy—Dr. Chandler—Patrick Henry—Extravagant Estimates—Act of Toleration—Low State of Religion in Maryland and Virginia—Dr. Hawks—Small Salaries—Metho-
dist Preachers—Itinerancy—The Tobacco Question—Alienation from the Church—Mercenary Pastors.

NO reader of the early chronicles of New England can fail to see that the Pilgrims who landed on Plymouth Rock were sincere men who believed themselves persecuted for conscience' sake. In recent times the fact has been doubted; and like most issues in the history of man, two sides to the question exist, and there will be found not a few arguments to sustain the position that those men who came over in the "May-flower" had all reasonable liberty to worship God as they pleased. Certainly this was the case in Holland, from whence they came directly to the shores of America. But the flock of John Robinson were Englishmen. Holland was to them a free country, because they were in sympathy with the dominant party there; and if they could have entered into all the feelings, prejudices, and pursuits of the native population, they would have been swallowed up, and their history would have filled a page, at most, in the annals of the Dutch Republic. But being Englishmen, the congregation of the Independent minister could not adapt themselves to the slow, cautious, and unenterprising Dutchmen. They saw nothing before them in Hol-

land but humiliating inferiority, and they dreamed of an empire as illustrious as that which resulted from the exodus from Egypt. The New World had no government of any kind. There were no institutions, no castes in society, no prejudices to be broken down. As the virgin soil invited the labor of the husbandman, so the pregnant future offered to their enthusiastic imagination a country in which the grand experiment of a holy nation could be tried.

They drew the picture of a State, a people, without sin, without crime. Grace abounding was able to vouchsafe divine help, and the experience of persecuted Christian men presented the alternative. They had felt the heavy hand of the High-churchman, whose principles pledged him to persistent and relentless exertion after conformity. Honestly or otherwise, he must strive to bring all Englishmen into the fold of the Church; and keeping them there, they must hear the voice of centuries, and obey the teachings of the guardian of the souls of men. They must come into the Ark, the Church of God, or perish in the deluge of wrath which divine justice had always in store for the evil-doer. Scruples of conscience were matters of no moment. What difference did it make whether the eucharist was celebrated on a table or an altar? What harm was there in episcopal robes, in reading prayers, in worshipping God in the magnificent sentences of a glorious liturgy?

Thus the High-churchman, having no scruples of his own, could not allow for them in others. Archbishop Laud, after the New England plantation had grown into some measure of success, proposed to send out to the new country a supply of bishops, that the

grace of God might have channels of distribution in the new country; but the Puritan powers in England had become too strong to allow their brethren across the ocean to be followed by the grasping hand of episcopal tyranny. A king who never knew the value of the truth and had no knowledge of kingly honor or integrity, and an archbishop who knew no maxims in politics or religion greater than abject obedience to the divine right of kings and bishops, brought the crown and the miter alike into the dust. The servant first, and then the master. Laud perished on the block, by the hands of men whom he had outraged and persecuted; and King Charles paid the penalty of unprincipled and persistent efforts to rob the people of their birthright of liberty.

"Our liberty to walk in the faith of the gospel with all good conscience, according to the order of the gospel," says John Norton, of Boston, to the restored monarch, Charles II., "was the cause of our transporting ourselves, with our wives, our little ones, and our substance, from that pleasant land over the Atlantic Ocean, into the vast wilderness. We could not live without the public worship of God, nor be permitted the public worship without such a yoke of subscription and conformity as we could not consent unto without sin. That we might therefore enjoy divine worship free from human mixtures, without offense to God, man, and our own consciences, we, with leave but not without tears, departed from our country, kindred, and fathers' houses, into this Patmos."*

"Had the sees in England fourscore years ago," writes Increase Mather in 1695, "been filled with such

* Cotton Mather's *Magnalia Christi Americana*, vol. i., p. 296.

archbishops and bishops as those which King William (whom God grant long to live and to reign) has preferred to episcopal dignity, there had never been a New England." * These testimonies of the day cannot be refuted. The Pilgrims were terribly in earnest, and they did not fly from imaginary terrors. Men were liable to the dungeon and the stake because they could not pray to the Almighty in the printed words of a book; and those hardy sons of adventure, seeking to escape from persecution, went out to face the Indians and the horrors of an inhospitable wilderness.

Can we be surprised, then, that these New England men, whose fathers had fled from the hard hand of episcopal conformity, should be startled at the proposition to introduce into America the system of persecution which had driven the Puritans from England? The untimely fate of Laud had forestalled action in the reign of Charles I. The unexpected death of the Queen had caused a similar miscarriage in the time of Queen Anne. But now, under the auspicious reign of a native Briton, the third attempt was made to establish an American episcopate.

A dozen clergymen, nearly all of whom were missionaries pensioned by the "Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts," assembled in a little village in New Jersey. They lamented the forlorn condition of the episcopal cause in the colonies, and especially in New England. Every denomination that aspired to be called a "Church" had all the machinery it required for order and discipline except the Episcopal. Nominally attached to the See of Lon-

* Mather's *Magnalia*, vol. i., p. 248.

don, it was a very slender tie that bound the Churchmen of the colonies to the mother Church. Every man who desired ordination must cross the ocean, on whose turbulent waters not less than twenty per cent. of these candidates for the ministry suffered fatal shipwreck. As no bishop existed in America, and none but bishops had the power to administer the rite of confirmation, so there were no rightly admitted members of the Church entitled to receive the Lord's Supper. Ingrafted into Christ and into the Church by baptism, the neophyte remained forever denied access to the communion-table for the want of a few words pronounced by the lips of a prelate, and the mysterious gift which is conveyed to the kneeling subject by the episcopal hands. High-church theory declared, No bishop, no Church. Human ingenuity strove in vain to prove that the Church of England existed in America without a bishop. An end to this anomaly was sought, and the dozen clergymen instructed one of their number to prepare an appeal to the ecclesiastical authorities of Great Britain.

The narrowness of view so evidently constitutional in the advocates of High-church doctrines appears in this "Appeal." Neglecting the advice of Archbishop Secker, "to give no umbrage to the people of any denomination,"* the writer—Dr. Chandler—sets forth in the most offensive manner possible, the pretensions of the Episcopal party to an absolute monopoly of the gospel of Christ. "Men may ridicule the notion of uninterrupted succession as they please," he exclaims, "but if the succession be once broken, and the powers of ordination once lost, not all the men on

* Letter to Rev. Richard Peters, in Fac-similes of Church Documents.

earth, not all the angels in heaven, without an immediate commission from Christ, can restore it! It is as great an absurdity for a man to preach without being properly sent, as it is to hear without a preacher, or to believe in him of whom they have never heard." *

The arrogance of this language is only equaled by the weakness of the argument it is intended to convey. The "power of ordination" is likened to something that may be dropped like a ring or a coin into the depths of the sea, to be recovered no more. If this "power" be lost, it can only be recovered by an "immediate commission from Christ." The admission is made, then, that the writer has no "immediate commission from Christ!" A sad admission, truly, in the ears of men who believed Jesus Christ to be the Head of the Church, and the sovereign authority that commissioned every messenger, whether apostle or deacon, that is sent into the vineyard of the Lord. But loose and absurd as the logic of this sentence is, it is a true reflex of the argument which prevails among High-churchmen everywhere. How should a man be "properly sent?" He should have the love of God in his own soul, and a desire to save the souls of his fellow-men. This the apostle Paul declares when he says that "whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." How shall they call unless they have heard of the Saviour? and who can tell them of him except those who have been saved by him? Ten thousand hands in consecrating forms may have been placed on a man's head, and it

* American Whig: a collection of tracts from the late newspapers, containing a number of pieces on the subject of the residence of Protestant bishops in the American colonies, etc. New York: 1768.

will avail nothing if the power of the saving Christ does not show itself in the preacher's heart. But of this apostolic truth we hear nothing from Dr. Chandler. It is the "laying on of hands" that is important. Knowledge of things divine, of the power of Christ in transforming, renewing, sanctifying the human soul—these things are never brought to the front as a necessary part of the "apostolical succession."

The publication of this "Appeal" was the signal for a strife of tongues and pens that echoed from Massachusetts to Georgia. A writer in a New York paper, under the name of "American Whig," began a thorough, well-reasoned criticism of the published document and of the plan of the American episcopate. Notwithstanding the assertion that the advocates of the episcopate did not wish the English type of episcopacy to be transferred to America, it was clearly shown by Lord Hale's testimony that a bishop was a civil officer in virtue of his appointment. "Every bishop, by his election and confirmation, even before consecration, has ecclesiastical jurisdiction annexed to his office as *judex ordinarius* within his diocese."* Whether they desired it or not, these bishops, from the moment of their appointment, became judges, having courts of jurisdiction over many of the dearest and most estimable rights of the citizen.

The writer in New York was soon assisted by others in Philadelphia and Boston. The Pennsylvania journal brought forward a disputant not inferior to the pioneer in the discussion. In dissecting the "Appeal" it was shown that the Presbyterian Church of Scot-

* American Whig, p. 32.

land was as much entitled to the name of "Established Church" as the Episcopal Church of England. Neither the one nor the other had any power or jurisdiction outside of the limits in which it was the State Establishment. It was therefore as absurd to speak of "the Church of England in America" as it would be to talk of "the Church of Jerusalem in Rome," or "the Church of Corinth in Antioch." The names limited the jurisdiction as much as the municipalities of London, Edinburgh, or Dublin were limited by their respective titles.

But the armor of the author of the "Appeal" was pierced in many sensitive spots. Dr. Chandler, and his brethren the missionaries, professed to desire bishops with jurisdiction over the clergy only, and without pomp or pride of state, giving themselves wholly to the Church, and supported solely by the voluntary contributions of the laity. Nevertheless, it was stated that a general tax for the support of the bishops would be no great hardship; and if any man refused to pay the tax, he would not deserve to be called a good subject, a loyal citizen. Thus the doctrine was avowed, almost in direct terms, that submission to the American episcopate was the test of loyalty to the King.

In answer to the critics who were dealing severely with the logic of the "Appeal," Dr. Chandler, the author, appeared, and Dr. Samuel Seabury, the secretary of the convention, affirmed that the conduct of one of his opponents deserved worse treatment than "a regard to my own character would suffer me to give him." What treatment was meant may be readily inferred by those who are acquainted with the early his-

tory of Episcopalianism in Virginia. In that colony the worship of the Church of England was established by law. At the time that Dr. Seabury was recording his impotent threat in New Jersey, John Waller, Lewis Craig, James Childs, and others, were lying in jail in Spottsylvania county, Virginia, imprisoned for the sole offense of preaching the gospel! The immortal Patrick Henry rode fifty miles to attend their trial; and after one of his impassioned flights of oratory, the presiding magistrate ordered the prisoners released.* More than forty days had some of these men languished in prison, while the "clergy" were seeking from the mother country a new set of officers and a more thoroughly organized system for the enforcement of "conformity" in America.

The most remarkable fact connected with this controversy is that the High-churchmen claimed that opposition to their wishes was "persecution" of the Church! Because they were not allowed to introduce an ecclesiastical system at war with the vital principles of American society, the Puritans and Presbyterians were persecuting "the Church!" Because they were not permitted to set up an Establishment that would soon rally to its support the whole power of the monarchy in the attempt to secure a compulsory conformity, they were denied their natural rights by the proscriptive voice of prejudice and passion!

In order to magnify the importance of this demand for bishops in America, Dr. Chandler estimated the adherents of the Establishment at "nearly or quite one million of persons." This extravagant estimate was reduced to less than one-fourth the number

* Bennett's *Memorials of Methodism in Virginia*, p. 39.

claimed. The vague and indefinite qualifications of a "Churchman" caused many to be numbered among the adherents of episcopacy who were utterly indifferent to all religious opinions. It would be difficult to define a "Churchman" when George Washington is so called, although he did not receive the Lord's Supper in his parish church;* and Patrick Henry was a vestryman, notwithstanding his withering denunciation of the intolerance, avarice, and inhumanity of the "clergy" and "the Church." But the broad and convenient rule which reckons all persons on our side, unless they are active partisans of our opponents, brought a large number of persons into a nominal connection with episcopacy who really had no preference for that or any other system of Church government.

But the most effective arguments on the side of the advocates of liberty of conscience against the project of an intolerant episcopal hierarchy, were those addressed to the hardy sons of New England. "In vain did our ancestors leave their native land, and fly into the wilderness to avoid spiritual tyranny," said one of these descendants of the Puritans, "if those who established it in England can extend it to America. In short, if the Parliament is to interfere and regulate one part of our internal police, why not every part? If they among whom we have no representatives; who, from the distance between them and us, must be unacquainted with our condition, circumstances, etc.; they in whose election we have no choice, over whose conduct we have no check, as the laws they make for us will not affect them; if our superiors

* Life of Bishop White, p. 197.

in Britain can bind on us religious establishments, and rule us by laws made at the distance of three thousand miles, we may boast of our liberty as we please, but it is no more than 'the baseless fabric of a vision.' " *

These were words of thrilling interest to the people who knew, from the vivid pictures drawn and exhibited to them in their childhood by fathers and mothers, that the iron heel of power would spare neither age nor sex when the interests of a proud hierarchy demanded the subjugation of "dissenters." It was one of Mr. Wesley's causes of gratitude to an enlightened monarchy that since the Act of Toleration, under William III., no man had suffered persecution in England by the State on account of his religion.† Technically "the State" did not send its magistrates to incite mobs and murderous factions against the early Methodists. "The State" did not cause the incumbents of Church livings to close the doors of the Lord's house against Mr. Wesley himself. When in danger of personal violence, at the last moment the heavy machinery of "the State" was brought into requisition, and the preachers of a free gospel were turned loose to run the hazards of brutal treatment again. These things are true, and they are causes of thankfulness that matters were not worse, as they might have been. But the suffering evangelists of Virginia did not find the prison-houses closed, nor the courts deaf to the appeals of inhumanity and prejudice. It mattered not to them whether "the State" did it, or the magistrates of "the State," or the mob unchecked by the constituted authorities; intolerance

* American Whig, p. 162. † Wesley's Works, vol. xi., p. 137.

did exist, and many persons suffered in England, as well as America, notwithstanding the humane spirit and purpose of the Act of Toleration.

The failure of the scheme for an American episcopate is so closely connected with the political events which resulted in the independence of the United States of America, that we cannot thoroughly understand the religious without some knowledge of the political question.

The character of the clergymen of the Church establishment in Virginia would have destroyed any denomination which subsisted upon the voluntary contributions of the people. Whatever the cause may have been, it is acknowledged by Episcopal writers that an earnest, pious, devoted minister of Christ was an exception to the rule in Virginia. Dr. Hawks, the historian of the Protestant Episcopal Church in Virginia,* gives a variety of reasons for this state of things. He acknowledges that after one hundred and fifteen years of indorsement by the civil authorities, the state of religion was much lower in Virginia than in some of the other colonies.† Only here and there was then to be found, at wide intervals, a true minister of the gospel, worthy of his vocation.

To account for this humiliating fact, the historian lays the blame partly on the colonial authorities and partly on the clergymen themselves. The colony was in bad repute abroad, and few competent persons in England wished to risk their fortunes in the wilds of America. The grace of God did not move them, and the love of Christ did not constrain them, to seek for the souls of either the colonists or the heathen Indi-

* Protestant Episcopal Church in Virginia, *passim*. † *Ibid.*, p. 86.

ans. The result was that men of questionable characters in Great Britain came to the colony, and entered upon the sacred office, without any authority whatever. The Bishop of Derry, in Ireland, in 1740, refused to give certificates to three ministers discarded from his diocese, but they came to America and obtained good livings without difficulty.* The clergy petitioned the Legislature in 1755, and in their petition they declare that many persons who are a disgrace to the ministry have obtained parishes, and dishonor the cause of religion by their conduct.†

Dr. Hawks thinks that the uncertain tenure by which the clergy held their parishes was one of the principal causes in producing this result. The argument is fatally defective. If the ministers had been men of God, men who felt the worth of souls and cared for the salvation of the people, no uncertainty of tenure could have produced a weak, heartless, and ungodly ministry. The feeble plea that a faithful minister would have been discharged by his vestry, if he ventured to reprove the sins and vices of the people, has been urged in many places as an excuse for ministerial delinquency. It is doubtful if a half dozen cases of this kind of persecution can be found on well-attested records. 'Bad as human nature is, there can be no question that a wicked man admires the faithful minister who denounces sin and wickedness in every form, provided the minister *lives* the gospel that he preaches. If a spirit of love and kindness tempers the reproofs of sin, there is no danger to him

* Hawks: Protestant Episcopal Church in Virginia, p. 117. † Ibid., p. 116.

who utters them, even among the vile and unregenerate sons of men.

Another cause assigned for the existence of an ungodly ministry was the slender salary which was paid to the incumbent of a parish. In many places glebe of two hundred acres were attached, and to the use of the house and land was added a salary of sixteen thousand pounds of tobacco, valued at twelve and a half shillings the hundred pounds. This was equivalent to nearly five hundred dollars of our currency, at a time in which that sum would have purchased much more than the same amount at this day. Those who advance this argument as a reason for the scarcity of ministers of real piety exhibit a culpable ignorance of the spirit of Christianity. If this salary did not supply the wants of the clergyman, of what variety of flesh and blood was the Methodist preacher made who more than fifty years after this period, was compelled to live upon an allowance of sixty-four dollars per annum? If a clergyman with a home, could not exist piously and honestly upon five hundred dollars a year in 1776, how did Bishop Asbury exist, without house or lands, upon sixty-four dollars per annum in 1785? Penuriousness is a crime, offensive to God, and destructive to the soul; but it has seldom been proved that good men have been kept out of the ministry because of the slender salaries furnished by the Church to her ministers. Men that are called of God to preach the gospel will find the basket and store supplied, but the man who regards the ministry as a profession which he is to enter as a stepping-stone to wealth or honor has yet to learn the first principles of the gospel of Christ.

This struggle for existence threatened to make a celibate ministry out of the first generation of traveling preachers. It is believed that at least two hundred of the most efficient preachers in American Methodism were lost to the itinerancy within twenty years after the organization of the Church. They were compelled to "locate," because either the conscience or the ability of the Church was inadequate to the support of married ministers. The deplorable alternative presented itself to those who were called of God to preach the gospel, either to abandon the family or resign the itinerant ministry. That many able and useful men could not see "the present distress," which was largely imaginary, is not surprising. But notwithstanding the severity of the trial, the Methodist preachers of the eighteenth century persevered in their benevolent work, and by slow degrees the heart of the Church was opened, and devised more liberal things.

But to return. If fifty pounds a year could afford maintenance in England, why did not a hundred pounds in America? Did the absence of deaneries, prebends, and bishoprics account for it? There were no high prizes in the colonies—only the souls of men to be saved from death and sin; hence, the laborers were few. At one time there were fifty parishes and ten clergymen.* A bounty of one hundred pounds sterling was offered to any one who would bring a "sufficient minister" into the colony.† "Many came, such as wore black coats, and could babble in a pulpit, roare in a tavern, exact from their parishioners, and rather by their disoluteness destroy than feed their flocks."‡

* Protestant Episcopal Church in Virginia, p. 64. † Hammond's Leah and Rachel, quoted by Dr. Hawks, p. 64. ‡ Ibid., p. 65.

In process of time a crisis arose which tested the religion and the patriotism, not to say the humanity, of "the clergy."

The law of 1748 gave specifically sixteen thousand pounds of tobacco as the salary of the minister of a parish. In 1757, during the war with the French, there was a failure in the tobacco crop. It was not possible to pay the salaries of the clergy if every pound of the staple had been used for that purpose. It was a time of great distress. It was just and proper, as it was inevitable, that the clergy should suffer in common with their people. The price of tobacco was raised to fifty shillings the hundred pounds. At this rate the salary of a minister would amount to two thousand dollars—an enormous sum in those days. The people could not pay it, and the Legislature came to their relief. The scarcity was so great that money was issued from the public funds to save the people from starvation. The Legislature enacted a law that the clergy should receive "a price for their salaries equal to crop-tobacco at eighteen shillings per hundred weight."* This was an advance of fifty per cent. upon the usual stipend allowed, and was a righteous and timely measure that should have received the commendation of all; but the clergy were aroused at this trespass upon their rights and Dr. Hawks thinks that they had the best of the argument in a moral point of view. As a question of law, it does not appear to be an outrage if a party who employs another should diminish his wages, provided the reason of the case justifies such a step. As a question of fact, in the money product the Legislature increased, rather than diminished, the salaries

* Protestant Episcopal Church in Virginia, p. 118.

That they were paid in an article of merchand which was liable to rise and fall with the mark abroad or the supplies at home, was a contingency, pressed in the face of the contract between the minister and the vestry. As a matter of public policy was certainly unjust that a few men should receive four times as much as was due them, at the time that their parishioners were absolutely in want of bread. That a class of men calling themselves servants of God and ambassadors of Christ should call for the payment of flesh due them in the strict letter of the bond, was a source of scandal that justly subjected the guilty parties to popular censure.

"There was growing up in men's minds a gradual alienation from the Church," says Dr. Hawks,* "because it was identified with those who were suspected of being more anxious to enrich themselves than to benefit the souls of others; and men began to admit the suspicion that the Establishment was proving a burden instead of a blessing." These are very mild words, but they are significant. The fact was, that the forbearance of the Legislature saved the "Establishment" from utter destruction. The officious Mr. Camm, the "commissary" of the Bishop of London, attacked the Legislature in all kinds of offensive articles, until no newspaper in Virginia would give currency to his assaults. By means of the commissary the act of the Legislature was reviewed by the Lord of Trade in London, and as the King had not approved the act, it was determined to make a test case on the salary question.

* Protestant Episcopal Church in Virginia, p. 120.

Chapter IV.

Mr. Maury, of Hanover—The Parson's Cause—First appearance of Patrick Henry—A great Speech and a great Triumph—Seeds of Revolution—Renewed Efforts for the Episcopate—A Protest—Vote of Thanks—Blessing in Disguise—Jacobite Bishops—Political Intrigues—Talbot and Welton—Bishop of Oxford—Validity of the Consecration of Talbot and Welton—Gracious Results of Episcopal Ordination—Balm for New England.

REV MR. MAURY, of Hanover, brought suit to recover damages against his vestry. The case proceeded in due form, and was about to be decided in favor of the clergyman, when a new phase of the question appeared. The law of 1748 allowing sixteen thousand pounds of tobacco was plain enough. The act of 1757, making a commutation in money at a given rate, was proved to be invalid, because it had been rejected by the King. Thus, in 1763 the issue was joined, the points proved, and the case was delivered to the jury by Mr. Maury's counsel, in perfect confidence of a large sum of damages to be assessed for the benefit of his client. The lawyer employed by the defense, seeing defeat inevitable, withdrew from the case. But there was present in the court-room a young man whose name has since become as famous as the cause he advocated in 1776. Patrick Henry stood for the first time before a jury. "He had been employed upon the withdrawal of the former counsel and as the very loose practice of that day permitted very great latitude of remark in advocates, when he

came before the jury, instead of entering upon a calm investigation of the amount of damages actually sustained, he skillfully played upon the passions of his hearers, aroused their prejudices, and poured forth torrents of eloquence upon the decision of the King in council, as indicating a wanton disregard of the true interests of a suffering people, and a heartless contempt of their necessities. It is very certain that all this had nothing to do with the question before the jury; but they readily imbibed sentiments so much in accordance with their interests and so agreeable to their prejudices against the clergy; and carried away by an eloquence as extraordinary as it was unexpected (for it was Mr. Henry's first cause in any court), they yielded to their feelings, and returned a verdict of one penny damages."*

Mr. Wirt, the biographer of Henry, presents the scene in very vivid colors. The young orator was embarrassed by the fact that his uncle, a clergyman, was upon the ground, and expected to be present at the trial. He was persuaded by the young lawyer to absent himself, because Henry intended to say "many hard things about the clergy." There was another cause for embarrassment—Patrick Henry's father was the presiding magistrate, and twenty clergymen were on the bench by the side of the judges.† With these facts before us, we can appreciate the picture as it has been painted by a later hand. John Esten Cooke thus describes the scene in which Patrick Henry won the title of the "Prophet of the Revolution:"

"A remarkable scene followed. Henry rose to ad-

* Protestant Episcopal Church in Virginia, p. 123. † Wirt's Life of Patrick Henry, p. 42.

dress the jury in presence of a great crowd. He had never before spoken in public, and at first his voice faltered. He hung his head, and seemed to be overwhelmed; but soon a strange transformation took place in his appearance. His head rose haughtily erect, and as he proceeded his delivery grew passionate. He bitterly denounced the clergy, a number of whom retired in indignation from the court-house and stigmatized the King, who had supported their demands, as a tyrant who had forfeited all claim to obedience. At this the counsel for the plaintiff cried 'The gentleman has spoken treason!' but Henry's language only grew more violent. The crowd around him swayed to and fro, in evident sympathy with the speaker, who with passionate vehemence insisted that the burgesses of Virginia were 'the only authority which could give force to the laws for the government of this colony.' The words were treason, since they defied the royal authority; and when the jury retired the crowd was in the wildest commotion. Five minutes afterward the jury returned with a verdict fixing the damages at 'one penny,' and a loud shout of applause followed. The jury, like the young orator had defied the will of the King; and when court adjourned, Patrick Henry was caught up and borne on the shoulders of the excited crowd, around the court green in triumph.

"Such was the famous 'Parsons' Cause.' An obscure lawsuit had assumed the proportions of an historic event. A great assemblage in one of the most important counties of Virginia had wildly cheered Henry's denunciation of the Crown and his demand that the authority of the burgesses of Virginia should

take precedence of the authority of the King of England."*

The growth of a popular opinion which aroused hostility to the monarchy itself was no encouraging prospect for the Church establishment. But it frequently happens that the presence of a great danger does not alarm those who are most concerned in its threatenings. The great majority of the clergymen in Virginia must have seen that this was no time to agitate the question of establishing a Church hierarchy in America. But the restless spirits of the North persevered in their "appeals," addressed sometimes to the King, sometimes to the people of Great Britain, and sometimes to the people in the colonies. The prejudices aroused against the Church by the conduct of the Virginia clergymen were exceeded, if possible, by the combined forces which were arrayed against an American episcopate in New England and the middle colonies. The controversy of 1768 developed the most formidable difficulties in the way of the petitioners, but they did not abandon their project. As the laymen became more and more tinctured with the republican spirit, they ceased to unite with the missionaries in their efforts to obtain a resident bishop. Finally the clergy stood quite alone, but not in the slightest degree abashed or moderated in their enthusiasm. Many of the laity opposed the movement, and some of these joined in the public protest against it in 1768. John Adams pronounced this controversy to be one of the principal causes of the American Revolution.†

* John Esten Cooke's *History of the People of Virginia*, p. 382.

† *Puritans and Their Principles*, p. 399.

So far from giving up in despair, we find the indefatigable Drs. Seabury, Chandler, and others, commissioning two of their number to visit the Southern colonies, and induce them to coöperate with the missionaries. Mr. Camm, the commissary of the Bishop of London, became as conspicuous in this enterprise as he had been in causing a resort to the courts in the famous salary controversy. But the times were not propitious, and even the representative of the Bishop of London had lost his influence. People remembered that the bishop had no *legal* jurisdiction, and that the law advisers of the Crown had declared that he had none in Virginia, or anywhere else in the colonies.* If the Bishop of London had no authority over the clergy in America, his commissary had none. Therefore, when Mr. Commissary Camm summoned the clergy, by public advertisement, to meet at William and Mary College, on the 4th of May, 1771, of nearly one hundred clergymen not a third part attended the meeting. So small was the representation that it was deemed prudent to adjourn, and call another convention of the clerical members of the Church. A month afterward, in response to this call, twelve clergymen assembled at the college, and entered upon the work of framing the desired petitions. At first it was decided not to send an address to the King, but this vote was reconsidered, and a resolution was passed ordering an address to the King upon the subject of an episcopate. In opposition to this movement were two of the professors in the college—Messrs. Henly and Swatkin. They favored the episcopal mode of Church government, but they regarded

* History of Maryland, by William Hall Browne, p. 122.

it as altogether inexpedient to attempt at that time to establish a system which had incurred the active hostility of a large part, perhaps a majority, of the people. They prepared a protest against the action of the meeting, basing their opposition upon several grounds. They contended that a dozen men could be called, in no proper sense, a *convention* representative of nearly a hundred ministers. The proposed address to the King did not exhibit due respect to the Bishop of London, and the disturbances occasioned by the Stamp Act, together with the recent rebellion in North Carolina, were reasons of sufficient weight, not to mention the general clamor at that time against the introduction of bishops.

When the Legislature met a resolution of thanks to the signers of the protest was adopted, *nemine contradicente*, in the following terms:

"Resolved, That the thanks of this House be given to the Rev. Mr. Henly, the Rev. Mr. Swatkin, the Rev. Mr. Hewitt, and the Rev. Mr. Bland, for the wise and well-timed opposition they have made to the pernicious project of a few mistaken clergymen, for introducing an American bishop; a measure by which much disturbance, great anxiety and apprehension would certainly take place among his Majesty's faithful American subjects; and that Mr. Richard Henry Lee and Mr. Bland do acquaint them therewith."*

A controversy followed, between the clergy of the North and those of the South, and pamphlets were exchanged by the parties, until questions of a more important character absorbed the attention of the people. Upon the whole, it can scarcely be doubted

* Protestant Episcopal Church in Virginia, p. 129.

that the defeat of this measure, if not "a blessing in disguise," was at least an escape from an issue which might have utterly destroyed the episcopal interest in the United States. "Twice was the goodly plan frustrated," says Dr. McVickar, in his *Memoir of Bishop Hobart*, "when on the very point of completion. In the reign of Charles II., as already noted, the patent was actually made out, appointing Rev. Dr. Alexander Murray, a good man, and the companion of the King's exile, Bishop of Virginia, with a general charge over the other provinces; but the scheme fell through by a change of ministry; and what Clarendon had done, the 'cabal' revoked, though the deeper cause probably was that the King himself had no heart in the matter. A second time, in the reign of Anne, was provision made, a scheme of four American bishoprics adopted, and certain government lands in the island of St. Kitts actually sold for their endowment. The death of the Queen cut this short, and although subsequently approved and recommended by the first and ablest men of the Church—by Berkeley, Butler, Gibson, Sherlock, and above all by that meekest of prelates, Archbishop Secker, it was never carried into effect. Berkeley not only wrote for it, but worked for it; he gave up rank and ease at home, to come over and lay the foundation of it, and would doubtless have succeeded, had not the provision for it been basely withdrawn after the accession of the House of Hanover—an act worthy of a court where 'Walpole ruled and Hoadley preached.' But the godless union of Church and State forbade it, and the time for action passed by"*

* *Memoir of Bishop Hobart*, p. 82.

This is strange language from an American citizen, from one who detests the "godless union of Church and State." To desire a transfer of that "godless union" to his own country he calls a "goodly plan," and argues as if the constitution and government of the kingdom of Christ were dependent upon a vote of the English Parliament, and the honesty of a British politician. Let us hope that there are few, if any, who coincide with these opinions in the latter part of the nineteenth century.

But what shall we say when we are informed by unquestionable authority that *bishops were ordained and sent over to America more than fifty years before the American Revolution?* The testimony is at hand. Alluding to the petitions sent to the mother country, Bishop Wilberforce says: "From all parts of the continent memorials were still sent home, though the greatest earnestness upon the subject was manifested in the Northern colonies, where, as we have seen, there was, from many causes, most of the life and vigor of religion." Let us pause a moment and reflect. This Church of England writer confesses that where the Episcopal influence in America was smallest, there "the life and vigor of religion" appeared in the greatest degree! Wherever Episcopalianism prevailed religion declined; where it was little known, religion flourished!

"One of these addresses," continues the Bishop, "touched on grounds that might have moved even Sir Robert Walpole. The bishops who had been deprived of their temporalities for refusing to take the oath of allegiance to William III., did not thereby lose their spiritual character. They had still, therefore, as of

old, the power of conferring holy orders, and of consecrating other bishops by the laying on of hands, although their doing so was plainly 'irregular and schismatical.' This step, unhappily, they took, at the imminent risk of entailing a fearful schism in the English Church. Having founded a counter episcopate at home, they could feel little scruple in granting to America that boon which England had so long and so unwarrantably withheld from her. It was therefore natural that some of the American clergy should look to them for succor, and that they should lend a favorable ear to their requests. Accordingly, Dr. Welton, and Mr. Talbot—the oldest missionary of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel—solicited and received consecration from the non-juring bishops. Dr. Welton was consecrated by Dr. Ralph Taylor, in 1722; Mr. Talbot shortly afterward by Drs. Taylor and Welton. Political disqualification made them unable to perform publicly any episcopal acts; but there is reason to believe that they privately administered the rite of confirmation, and in some cases at least ordained clergy.*

Let the reader keep in mind the fact that the Bishop of Oxford admits the *validity* of these ordinations. It is true that the non-juring bishops were deposed from their offices, and were no longer bishops of the Church of England, but they could, nevertheless, ordain bishops, as many as they pleased, and whenever they pleased, for the Church of Christ throughout the world! According to this doctrine the bishops that Queen Elizabeth deposed were still bishops, and could ordain any number of bishops, because they did not

* History of the Protestant Episcopal Church in America, by the Bishop of Oxford, p. 160.

lose their spiritual character in the loss of "temporalities." The Roman Catholic bishops who adhered to the old faith were bishops, but bishops of what? And of what Church was Dr. Taylor a bishop? Not of the Church of England, certainly, nor of Ireland, nor of Scotland. He had no "see," no legal status whatever. But he could ordain bishops, and did send two skulking ecclesiastics into America in defiance of the laws of the country!

"The Rev. John Talbot," says Dr. Beardsley "the associate of Mr. Keith in his missionary travels, and afterward stationed at Burlington, New Jersey, visited England in 1720. While there he, with Rev. Dr. Welton, was consecrated to the episcopal office by the non-juring bishops, and returned to Burlington. Welton came to Philadelphia, and officiated for a time in Christ Church in that city. 'Such a step,' says Hawkins, 'admits of no justification; but we may well suppose that he (Talbot) was led to take it by no personal ambition, but by that strong and earnest conviction of the absolute necessity of an episcopate for the welfare of the Church in America, of which his letters afford such abundant testimony. It appears that he occasionally assumed the episcopal dress, and that he administered the ordinance of confirmation. Whatever confusion or schism might have arisen by the irregular exercise of the episcopal office was prevented by an order from the Privy Council for Welton's return to England, and the death of Mr. Talbot, which occurred in 1727.'"*

These statements are recorded by writers who have undertaken to furnish the history of the Protestant

* History of the Episcopal Church in Connecticut, vol. i., p. 252, *note*.

Episcopal Church; but, like many other important facts concerning that Church, there are not wanting some to deny or to question the truth of the story Mr. De Costa, in the sketch of the "Colonial Church," prefixed to Dr. White's *Memoirs*, speaking of Talbot says: "There appears to be no evidence that the Church can accept of the episcopal character claimed for him. He never performed any episcopal act and he denied that he ever attempted to exercise any supervision of his brethren."* Dr. Hawks, in his memorials of the Episcopal Church in Maryland, thinks there is no doubt of Talbot's consecration, but Mr. De Costa traces the story to Percival, in his "Apology for Apostolical Succession," and leaves the matter in doubt.

Bishop Wilberforce, on the other hand, produces a genuine case of blessedness resulting from the consecrating hands of Dr. Welton; and it is a suggestive incident that furnishes the proof of transmitted apostolic powers. "A Congregational teacher in New England," says the Bishop of Oxford, "shortly before this time began to doubt the lawfulness of his appointment to the ministry. His doubt and fears were often hinted, and became well known amongst his people. About the time of Dr. Welton's visit he left home for a few weeks, giving no intimation of the object or direction of his journey. On his return he resumed his pastoral charge, and now declared himself entirely contented with his ministerial commission. Whence this contentment sprung he never expressly stated, but there were reasons for the universal belief that he had received at Dr. Welton's hands the gift of ordination."†

* Colonial Church, p. 36. † History of Prot. Ep. Church, p. 161.

This is a specimen of the acts of superstition attributed to the colonial clergymen of non-episcopal Churches; but it seems to be one of those cases that were manufactured, either in part or in whole, for the purpose of creating sympathy in England. The pathos of the picture is very striking. A descendant of the Pilgrims of Plymouth has a troubled conscience. He imagines that the hands that once laid bloody stripes upon his forefathers can heal his wounded spirit by transmitting through his head the apostolic grace that his heart needs very much. He flies by night, through desert and forest, until he can get the sight of a man who has recently accompanied with some outlawed ecclesiastics of the mother country. This man who carries episcopal grace in his hands is obliged to move in profound secrecy. The men who "consecrated" him were guilty of a crime according to the laws of Episcopal England, and a secret conclave met to give him charge of the flock of Christ in America! But such are the conditions that he becomes a political pest and source of corruption to the people and the clergy. "It is certain," wrote one of the missionaries, "that the Non-jurors have sent over two bishops into America, and one of them has traveled through the country upon a design to promote that cause."* Now, this obedient subject of the House of Hanover, Congregationalist that he is, finds the consecrated hands of Dr. Welton, has them laid upon his head, and returns home, having "the gift of ordination" by the grace of his Majesty, the Roman Catholic Pretender, James III. So soon after the abortive political movement of 1715, it was an act of wis-

* History of Protestant Episcopal Church, p. 162.

dom to keep the name of that pretended Congregational clergyman a profound secret also.

This is one version of the story. Another is, or might be rendered, that the troubled minister, having time and solitude for reflection in his journey, seeing that the "apostolical succession" could only reach him through an act of treason to the government under which he lived, concluded that it was better to plead a commission from Christ Jesus the Lord than one from a fugitive Roman Catholic in Europe, and "went down to his house justified" by a sober second thought!

However the fact may be, it does not appear that the non-episcopal writers in the "American Whig" of 1768 had any knowledge of this Jacobite episode of Talbot and Welton. No mention is made of these pretended bishops, and Episcopal writers in this country, when they mention the matter at all, are content to consign it to a foot-note. We shall see, however, in the course of this volume, the effort of another set of non-juring bishops to give episcopacy to America.

Chapter V.

A Scriptural Bishop Wanted—Source of Ministerial Authority—Sir William Blackstone—The King's Credentials—Authority and Jurisdiction—Queen Elizabeth and Bishop Cox—Unfrocking a Bishop—Man-made Ministry—Baptists try the Episcopal Form of Church Government—Two Dioceses in the Baptist Church of Virginia—Episcopacy Scriptural—Bishops Elected and Ordained: Harris, Waller, and Craig—Duties of the Baptist Bishops—Dr. Howell's Opinion—Failure of Baptist Episcopacy—Accounting for this Episode—Blackstone Opposed to Religious Liberty—English Bishops compelled to Ordain the King's Appointees—Despotism in Church and State—Book of Homilies—Hallam—Spiritual Sovereignty in America—Schism of Archbishop San-croft and the English Non-jurors—Break in the Apostolical Succession.

WHEN the American Episcopalians were striving to secure a resident bishop for the colonies, they declared that they desired only a *scriptural* bishop. They did not state the precise meaning which they attached to the phrase "scriptural." It was a very delicate, if not invidious task indeed, and might have incurred the displeasure of their ecclesiastical lords in England. It is certain that the officer known in the New Testament as an *episcopos*, or *bishop*, had no civil jurisdiction or authority attached to his office. To the extent then that the English bishops were civil officers by virtue of their ecclesiastical positions, they were, in the proper sense of the term, *unscriptural* bishops.

"The clergy of the Church of England," says Sir William Blackstone, "in matters of external polity

and of private right, *derive all their title from the civil magistrate*; they look up to the King as their head, to the Parliament as their lawgiver, and pride themselves in nothing more justly than in being true members of the Church, emphatically *by law established*.”* This attitude of the clergy is the inevitable result of an Established Church on the one part, and of the theory which makes episcopacy the *fons et origo*—the one absolute source of ministerial authority—on the other. The source of *episcopal* authority is the chief magistrate of the country, and therefore all *ministerial* authority is derived from the King. This will appear to be evident when we consider the royal mandate the terms of which were fixed in the reign of Edward VI.: “We name, make, create, constitute, and declare N. Bishop of N., to have and to hold to himself the said bishopric during the term of his natural life, if for so long a time he behave himself well therein; *and we empower him to confer orders, to institute to livings, to exercise all manner of jurisdiction, and to do all that appertains to the episcopal or pastoral office, over and above the things known to have been committed to him by God in the Scriptures, in place of us, in our name, and by our royal authority.*” †

It has been argued that the bishop receives his episcopal *authority* by virtue of his consecration, and that the King only gives him *jurisdiction* in the see to which he is appointed. This is an ingenious plea, but it will not bear a close scrutiny. What is “authority” without “jurisdiction?” and what right has a king to give either of these things in a Christian Church?

* Blackstone's Commentaries, B. IV., c. 8, 101. † Trials of a Mind, by Bishop Ives, p. 117.

Has the King absolute spiritual jurisdiction? Is the chief magistrate a bishop? If not, how can a layman confer that which he does not possess? Has Queen Victoria any spiritual jurisdiction in the Church of England? If she has, whence was it derived—of God or of men? If of men, it is worthless; for Jesus Christ is the Sovereign Head of his Church. If she derives it of God, then is she called by the Holy Ghost to the functions of the Christian ministry. If a bishop ordains a minister in the name of the Queen and by the authority of the Queen, then her Majesty may ordain a candidate in her own person. That which is done through an agent may be done in *propria persona*, by the principal. If the Head of the Church cannot call, consecrate, and constitute a bishop in the Church of England without the consent of the Queen, then the Church of England, as such, is no part of the sovereign kingdom of Christ.

The tenor of this argument is destructive to all Established Churches, wherever they may be, and under whatever form of government they may exist. It is not denied that kings may be pious men; that they may appoint worthy ministers of the gospel to high places of trust and honor, but it is affirmed that our Lord and Saviour has never placed the sovereign authority of his Church in the hands of any man, whether styled a king, defender of the faith, or a pope—the bishop of bishops. The two theories of Church government are equally untenable, equally foreign to the letter and to the spirit of the Holy Scriptures.

When Cox, Bishop of Ely, refused to permit his property to be sacrificed for the advantage of another, Queen Elizabeth sent him a significant message:

“Proud prelate,” wrote the irate Queen, “you know what you were before I made you what you are. If you do not immediately comply with my request, I will unfrock you.”* This was no empty boast. The Bishop knew very well that she would be as good as her word, and submitted to the spoliation. High-churchmen have a great deal to say about a “man-made ministry.” What is this? What is the character of that episcopacy which can be made and unmade at the whim of a capricious woman? Can that be a Church of Christ in which the sovereign power is exercised by a man or a woman who happens to be born an heir to a reigning monarch? Can the accident of birth determine and supply the qualifications of the chief ruler in the house of God?

These evils are not inseparable from the episcopal form of Church government, nor are they, perhaps, essential to the union of Church and State. In some form or degree corruptions have been engendered in every country that has a national Church—corruptions that would have no existence in a Church untrammelled by the State. But episcopacy, as such, has no connection with lawless power, and no necessary tendency to introduce unscriptural and pernicious practices into the kingdom of Christ. There is a conservative influence in a moderate and scriptural form of episcopal government. But the source of all authority in the kingdom of Christ is the Lord himself, acting through, and giving his sanction to, the appointments made by the Church in his name.

The experiment of the Baptist Churches in Virginia, in the last century, demonstrated that episcopacy

* Sir John Harington's *Nugæ Antiquæ*, vol. i., p. 513.

is an impracticable system of government for a large portion of the Lord's people. For several years prior to 1776, the Baptists of Virginia discussed the expediency of adopting an episcopal form of government. The discussion was thorough, and the conclusion was arrived at in 1776, by the General Association of Virginia Baptists. By a unanimous vote they declared that episcopacy had been established in the Church by Christ, the Head, and that the office of bishop "was now in use in Christ's Church." Having determined this question, they proceeded to establish the office, and fill it by appointment.* The Rev. Samuel Harris was elected the first bishop, and all that part of Virginia lying south of the James River was declared to be his diocese. In the autumn of the same year the Association was called together, and they proceeded to elect two more bishops—John Waller and Elijah Craig. The diocese of these coadjutor bishops was all of the State lying north of the James River. The three ministers elevated to the episcopal office by their Baptist brethren were men of distinction who had suffered for the preaching of the gospel only two years before this time. Imprisoned for weeks, and some of them for months, they were not men to enter upon any office in the Church without careful and prayerful consideration. They were not enacting a comedy, but they were in earnest, and went forth into the harvest-fields of Virginia as regularly constituted bishops of the Baptist Episcopal Church.

The duties assigned to these officers were as follows: "To pervade the churches; to do, or at least to see to, the work of ordination; to set in order the things that

* Howell's Early Baptists of Virginia, p. 107.

are wanting; and to make report to the next Association." "The revolution in Church polity," says Howell, "is now complete. It was achieved not without much excitement and discussion, but without any division. The circumstances that surrounded them did not admit of division; their political influence, not to say their safety, would have been endangered by it; they could not successfully resist the revolution, they therefore accepted it unanimously. The General Association had assumed powers not exceeded by any previous body of clergy in any age, Catholic or Protestant. Not only had it created and sent forth three diocesan bishops, under the name of 'apostles, or messengers,' but it had taken them—unlike the English Baptists—from the jurisdiction of the individual churches of which they were members, to whose discipline they were no longer subject; ordination of ministers was removed from the churches and given to the bishops; it instructed the churches how to proceed in case they should commit offenses demanding their impeachment; and if in this lower court an indictment was sustained, it provided for the organization of a high court to be called 'A General Conference of the Churches,' which should have power to 'excommunicate or restore them.' " *

"All this," says Dr. Howell, "was monstrous." The new bishops went forth to "pervade the churches," but these loyal sons of independence would not consent to be "pervaded." A reaction followed. The principal advocates of episcopacy had failed to secure election to the coveted honor, and before another year had expired it was discovered that episcopacy be-

* Howell's *Early Baptists of Virginia*, p. 110.

longed to the Jewish temple, and not to the Christian church. The bishops disappeared from office and from history, and "gladly resumed their places beside their brother presbyters."*

It has been stated, in explanation of this episode in Church history, that a great number of converts from the Church of England had been brought into the Baptist churches, and that these new converts brought their episcopal opinions with them. This does not appear to be a satisfactory reason for a change from congregationalism to episcopacy, two widely separated systems. But whatever it was that caused the transformation, no one except a High-churchman could deny the right of the Baptist Church to establish an episcopal form of government, if the people desired to do so. He who denies the right to choose the methods of advancing the cause of the Redeemer, must be able to prove that there is a definite, fixed form of Church government recorded in the New Testament, and that conformity thereto is required by the special command of the Lord Jesus. Inferences will not do, because they are capable of abuses too numerous and too dangerous to render them reliable. It is a most audacious spirit that dares to usurp the authority of Christ himself, to bless those whom he has not blessed, and to curse those whom he has not condemned. And yet this spirit is the legitimate product of an Established Church. Erastian principles are interwoven into the modes of English thought and feeling to such an extent that they manifest themselves in the expounders of the law, as well as among ecclesiastical politicians. Sir William Blackstone de-

* Howell's Early Baptists of Virginia, p. 115.

clares religious liberty to be incompatible with civil allegiance to a sovereign authority. His words can scarcely bear any other construction. "Whereas the notions of ecclesiastical liberty," he says, "as well in one extreme as the other (for I here only speak of extremes) are equally and totally destructive of those ties and obligations by which all society is kept together; equally encroaching on those rights which reason and the original contract of every free State in the universe have vested in the sovereign power; and equally aiming at a distinct, independent supremacy of their own, where spiritual men and spiritual causes are concerned."*

If "spiritual men" are not to be independent and supreme in spiritual causes, the Church of Christ is not free. By "spiritual men" we understand the members of the spiritual body of Christ; and for these, in questions that appertain to the well-being of Christ's kingdom—in other words, in "spiritual causes,"—we must claim independence of civil magistrates, and "supremacy of their own." In civil matters, in all questions involving the rights of the citizen as such, the State is sovereign, and cannot know any power or authority superior to itself; but in questions of religious and moral principle, affecting the spiritual welfare of the citizen; not as a component part of the commonwealth, but as a member of the Church of Christ, it is folly to say that the State has supreme jurisdiction, or any jurisdiction whatever. If there be any meaning in our Saviour's declaration which is applicable to modern society, then the statement that the kingdom of Christ is not of this world must be

* Blackstone's Commentaries, B. IV., c. 8, 104.

understood as drawing a distinct line of separation between the civil and spiritual jurisdictions to which men are subject. Blackstone's theory of government not only destroys the independence of the kingdom of Christ, but utterly subverts and overthrows all pretense of authority in the Church. It is true that his immediate object was to combat the claim of spiritual allegiance to the Bishop of Rome, and the efforts of the papacy to withdraw ecclesiastics from civil jurisdiction. The "benefit of clergy" caused many felons to escape all punishment, and established a privileged class which had no restraint whatever. This was an evil of great magnitude, but when it was further demanded that "spiritual persons"—monks or priests of the Roman Church—should be exempt from arrest, imprisonment, or punishment by the civil power, the degradation of the State became complete. But there is a vast difference between subjecting the State to the tyranny of the Church and the exercise of legitimate and necessary functions given by the Sovereign Head of the Church to his subjects and followers for their own protection, well-being, and furtherance toward eternal happiness.

The King of Great Britain, or his prime-minister, may send the name of a clergyman to be elected bishop, by a dean and chapter. If the electors refuse to vote for the man chosen by the King, they subject themselves to the statute of *præmunire*; and if a bishop or archbishop should refuse to ordain a man appointed by the King, every one so refusing incurs the same penalty.*

The serious character of this penalty is seen in the

* Blackstone, IV., c. 8, 115.

terms, "that from the conviction the defendant shall be out of the King's protection, and his lands and tenements, goods and chattels forfeited to the King; and that his body shall remain in prison at the King's pleasure.

Such delinquent, though protected as a part of the public from public wrongs, can bring no action for any private injury, how atrocious soever, being so far out of the protection of the law that it will not guard his civil rights, nor remedy any grievance which he as an individual may suffer. And no man, knowing him to be guilty, can with safety give him comfort, aid, or relief." *

A bishop ordaining another bishop without the consent of the King would therefore subject himself to a species of excommunication. Let us suppose that a million of communicants had formally chosen Dr. White, of Pennsylvania, as Bishop of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States. These souls, a million in number, cannot authorize the ordination of a bishop, nor can any one nor all the bishops and archbishops in England ordain the bishop elect until the King of England, through an act of Parliament, has promised to hold the consecrators guiltless! Can any man believe that these things are well-pleasing to our Lord and Master? Is it not a wonderful superstition that holds the integrity and the existence of the Church of Christ at the option of a man who owes his crown to an act of Parliament?

The result of this subjection of the Church to the State is the inevitable growth of despotism in both departments of the government. All advocates of the union of Church and State are not High-churchmen,

but all High-churchmen are advocates of this union. Resistance, even if it is developed only in opinions expressed, creates resentment and the increase of repressive measures, until "dissenters" are pronounced disloyal and enemies of their country. "That which has been called the High-church party in England," says Lord John Russell, "has made itself unfortunately remarkable for a bitter hatred of liberty and toleration."* In the reign of Charles I., the pretended Arminian opinions of the higher clergy had been cited as the cause of their becoming obnoxious to the House of Commons. Hallam tells us that this is a mistake. The High-churchmen had "studiously inculcated that resistance to the commands of rulers was in every conceivable instance a heinous sin; a tenet so evidently subversive of all civil liberty that it can be little worth while to argue about right and privilege whenever it has obtained a hold on the understanding and conscience of a nation."†

It was this doctrine of non-resistance that brought the party of Archbishop Laud, and that of Hampden, Prynne, and Cromwell, face to face in the dread arbitrament of war. But the party hostile to liberty could be called in no proper sense "Arminian." They agreed with Arminius in rejecting unconditional decrees, but they parted company with him on the doctrine of religious liberty. The gentle-spirited professor of Leyden had taught with eminent ability the sovereignty of the human conscience under correction of God alone. Laud and his party, with the vast majority of Englishmen in his time, were for compelling

* Life of William Lord Russell, vol. ii., p. 13. † Hallam's Constitutional History of England, vol. i., p. 305.

conformity, at the expense of the individual conscience. To do this the kingly power must be absolute, and resistance to the monarch must be treason in all cases whatsoever. Nor was the Church of the Reformation silent upon this point. Revolting from Catholicism, England had adopted principles as capable of injury to the rights of men as any tenet of the Papal Church.

“God alloweth neither the dignity of any person,” says the Book of Homilies, “nor the multitude of any people, nor the might of any cause, as sufficient for the which the subjects may move rebellion against their princes. Turn over and read the histories of all nations, look over the chronicles of our own country, call to mind so many rebellions of old time, and some yet fresh in memory; ye shall not find that God ever prospered any rebellion against their natural and lawful prince, but contrariwise, that the rebels were overthrown and slain, and such as were taken prisoners dreadfully executed.”*

The absurdity of this appeal to history did not appear to the writer of the sermon, nor does he seem to have been well versed in the annals of his own country. King John and his barons ought to have been in the mind of every hearer of that sermon, and probably there were some to whom the vision of the Great Charter was more than a thing of fancy. Whether Cranmer wrote that homily or it was written by one of his co-laborers does not matter; there, in the recognized oracles of the Church of England, lies a document which proclaims *all* resistance to princes to be treason, and a crime against the Majesty of heaven

*Homily against Willful Disobedience and Rebellion.

itself. Nor is this all. Archbishop Cranmer, if he did not write the words of this homily, practiced its teachings to the extent of degrading his own office and humiliating the Church. During the reign of Henry VIII., he advocated the doctrine of non-resistance; and although he had been created an archbishop by Henry, at the commencement of the reign of Edward VI. he took out a new commission, to hold the see of Canterbury during the pleasure of the King.* This was a confession that he was an officer of the King and not of the Church, and liable to be removed at any time by the royal command.

This subjection of the Church to the State becomes a source of perpetual strife in all countries that have national churches. The ambition of ecclesiastics aspires to authority and untrammelled power. At the same time the convictions of good and true men cannot fail to regard the humiliation of the Church as a great evil, and destructive to the designs and purposes of the kingdom of Christ. Churchmen become conspirators to degrade the State, and make the civil power the servant of the ecclesiastical authority. This struggle has existed in other countries than those in communion with the Roman Church. "It ought always to be remembered that *ecclesiastical* and not merely *papal* encroachments," says Hallam, "are what civil governments and the laity in general have had to resist; a point which some very zealous opposers of Rome have been willing to keep out of sight. The latter arose out of the former, and perhaps were in some respects less objectionable. But the true enemy is what are called High-church principles, be

* Hallam, vol. i., p. 74.

they maintained by a pope, a bishop, or a presbyter."*

The historian has placed the truth in a clear light in the final sentence above quoted. It is the claim to domineer over the State and the consciences of men that forms the distinctive principle of evil in High-church parties, whether they are to be found in the Church of Rome, the Church of England, or the Presbyterian Church of Scotland. The divine right of kings and the divine right of bishops, although they are supported by the same arguments, and are usually advocated by the same class of men, yet they are uncompromising rivals for sovereign power, and therefore cannot be at peace. The Council of Trent dare not acknowledge the divine right of bishops, because that acknowledgment, sooner or later, must work the overthrow of the sovereign pontiff, the Pope. The divine right of kings may be confessed by a Church that needs civil power to subdue dissent, but when the dissenters have conformed, and no internal enemy appears, the ecclesiastical power will rise in rebellion against the civil, and give to the divine right of bishops the supreme place in the government of society. These are the lessons of history, recorded in the annals of fifteen centuries.

It may surprise the reader to learn that spiritual sovereignty is claimed by men acting as bishops of a Protestant Church in the United States. Chapin, in his "Primitive Church," says: "The Father committed all judgment to the Son (John v. 22), and at the time he instituted the sacrament of the holy communion he appointed to his apostles (*diatithemai*, made

* Middle Ages, vol. ii., p. 244, note.

over, or committed to them, as *by devise, or bequest*) the kingdom which the Father had appointed or committed to him (Luke xxii. 29)—(*ina*)—*in order that they might eat and drink at his table, and sit on thrones (the emblems of power), judging (in a judicial sense) the twelve tribes (or persons composing 'the commonwealth') of Israel* (Eph. ii. 22); which in the New Testament signifies the Church.”* The apostles having received this kingdom from Christ, have transmitted it to their successors, the bishops, and thus the sovereignty of Jesus Christ has been transmitted from age to age, until it now resides in the bishops of the Protestant Episcopal Church of the United States! This is the tenor of Chapin’s argument, as summed up by Mr. Hall:† “The sum of the whole view is, that whatever power, prerogative, or sovereignty Christ had over the Church, he transferred it by commission to the apostles, and that sovereignty the bishops now hold.” “The apostles were raised to the very same office which Christ himself held,” says Bishop McCoskry, of Michigan. “I mean that which belongs to him in his human nature as head and governor of the Church. They were to supply his place in this respect; and in short, to do every thing which Christ would have done had he continued on the earth. He (Christ) is the head and permanent ruler thereof, and although now removed from sight, and seated on his mediatorial throne, yet he governs and regulates the Church, or kingdom (as it is frequently called), by his constituted agents, to whom he has committed the very same authority which he received from the Father.”‡ The

* Primitive Church, p. 173. † Puritans and Their Principles, p. 302. ‡ Ibid., p. 356.

judicious reader must determine how nearly these words are akin to blasphemy. That the immaculate, unerring spirit of Jesus Christ, Head of the Church, has been transmitted through a thousand impious hands to sinful mortals who vaunt themselves in high-swelling words of exclusive power in the kingdom of God, is a proposition which startles the conscience of this age. Whereunto will this thing grow?

Rome makes no higher claim for the sovereign pontiff. Are we to protest against that claim and admit that the same powers are vested in every man who calls himself the bishop of a diocese? Are we to give up the doctrine of *one* pope, to substitute for it the doctrine of an army of popes? Happily in this country we can afford to smile at pretensions that offer fair targets for the shafts of ridicule. Our Constitution secures liberty of conscience, and no denomination can legislate itself into the patronage and power of the State. But a hundred years ago it was otherwise. Before the independence of the colonies was established, it was a terror that threatened every Non-conformist in America. The High-churchman, supported by a foreign society, inviting the civil sword of the monarchy to strike down his enemies, either concealed his principles when secrecy was prudence or openly avowed his intentions where he had nothing to fear from the threats of the multitude.

Upon the principles here announced, let us test the character of the authority possessed by Bishop McCoskry. His titles come from the English Episcopacy, and the value of the title is a question of debate. There may be ninety-nine links in a chain connected together, but if there are one hundred links required

to *complete* the chain, of what value are the ninety-nine? Let us suppose that no flaw can be found in the succession of the Archbishop of Canterbury up to the year 1691. Not a very long period, but one that contains events of great magnitude. In 1677 William Sancroft was made Archbishop of Canterbury. Adhering to the House of Stuart, he refused to take the oath of allegiance to William III., in 1688, and was deposed from office. He had behaved like a true man and a true Protestant in resisting the attempts of King James to introduce popery into England. Nevertheless, his conscience would not permit him to set aside a popish king who was seeking to destroy the Church of England, in favor of a Protestant monarch whose title was declared by Act of Parliament and the popular will in many forms. Sancroft would not repudiate his king, nor would he give up his office. The mild and forbearing Prince of Orange did not resent the refusal of the Archbishop to perform the ceremony of coronation. No efforts of conciliation could have any influence with the stubborn Bishop. He remained at Lambeth, refused to enter the House of Lords, or to give any advice concerning public affairs. "It seems by no means easy," says his biographer, Dr. D'Oyly, "for the most partial hand to assign any sufficient reason for his conduct, or to suggest any adequate grounds on which it may be justified."* But Sancroft remained in his palace, and resisted every intimation that he ought to remove from the palace of a see whose duties he was not permitted or not disposed to perform. King William suffered the friends of the Archbishop to visit him for the purpose of con-

* Life of Sancroft, vol. i., p. 430.

vincing him of the propriety of yielding to the voice of the nation at large, and to that end granted him several months for consideration. Never was stubborn subject more tenderly dealt with by a generous monarch. The King had extended the time until the first day of August, 1790—nearly one year and ten months—and still Sancroft persisted in refusing to take the oath of allegiance. He was suspended from office, but remained at Lambeth, maintaining the same attendance and splendor of establishment. Twelve months after his deprivation he was still at Lambeth, and did not leave it until the 3d of August, 1791, and then under the pressure of a civil officer with a writ of ejection!

This man either was or he was not a “successor of the apostles.” If he was a true bishop, and the same power was transmitted to him that belonged to our Saviour—that is to say, *sovereign* power in the Church—what was the power that deposed him from office? What is the status of the authority that can expell the *sovereign* of the kingdom of Christ from his dominions? His offense was a *political* one, but it was punished by banishment from his see and deprivation of all ecclesiastical functions. This was the decree of the government. But Sancroft did not take this view of the matter. “He was induced to think and speak of the prelates and clergy who refused the new oath, and were in consequence ejected, as forming the true Church of England, while he looked upon the rest who remained in possession of their benefices, or were appointed to those vacated by the Non-jurors, as forming an apostate and rebellious Church. And under the influence of the same feelings he was also induced

to take steps which no friend to his memory can justify or approve, for laying the foundation of a permanent schism in the Church of England.”* That this was a *true schism*, having every mark of that species of division which is productive of countless evils to the cause of Christ, is so evident that there can be no room for controversy. Of uncharitableness, censoriousness, and bitterness, Dr. Sancroft became a notorious example. “Throughout his whole retirement,” says his biographer, “particularly during his last sickness, he never permitted clergymen who had taken the oaths to perform the offices of religion about him, and never received the communion with them. It appears that reports had been spread in London, that during his last illness he had changed his practice, and received the communion from the hands of a juror.” In order to contradict this report, he dictated the following letter to one of his friends, stating what his practice was:

“NOVEMBER 15, 1693.

“My lord is sensible of how great concernment it is, who ministers to him in holy things. He never receiveth the sacrament, but with those who come not at the parish and are Non-jurors. He never admits any of the irregular clergy to be at the holy offices. As for the rest, if they come when he goes to prayers, he excludes them not. This has been his course. This my lord dictated to me from his own mouth. You see how ready his apprehension and judgment are.”

“The writer who records this,” says the biographer, “adds that he never altered his practice afterward, and that he took especial care that no juror should

* Life of Sancroft, vol. ii., p. 29.

perform over him the burial-service, and even appointed by name the person whom he desired to officiate.”*

Here, then, we have a true and a false Church of England. The deposed Archbishop of Canterbury proceeds to make a formal consignment of his powers to Dr. Lloyd, the deprived Bishop of Norwich. What had Dr. Sancroft to consign? He went further, however. “A second measure which he took, or at least in which he concurred, still less justifiable, was the providing for a regular succession of non-juring prelates and ministers.”† King James—now the pretender, not the true sovereign—appointed Dr. Hicke and Mr. Wagstaff to be ordained bishops by the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Bishop of Norwich, but Dr. Sancroft died before their consecration. But the ceremony was performed, and a line of the “apostolical succession” was kept up until 1779, when Dr. Gordon, the last of the English non-juring bishops, died. “It is supposed that at the end of the last century there was not a single non-juring congregation or minister remaining.”‡

With the motives of Dr. Sancroft and his friends we have no concern. Our interest in the matter is purely that of a great question in Church history. Dr. Sancroft was either in the right or he was in the wrong. If he acted rightly, the apostolical succession has been lost in England, for it is admitted that the Non-jurors have died out of the land. If he acted wrongfully, then a civil magistrate has the right to invade the Church of Christ, to depose its officers, and to banish from the kingdom of grace the agents to whom the Lord Jesus has committed the government

* Life of Sancroft, vol. ii., p. 62. † Ibid., p. 32. ‡ Ibid., p. 35.

of his people. If Dr. Sancroft was constituted Archbishop of Canterbury by the will and in obedience to the authority of Christ, the Supreme Head of the Church, his deposition was an act of rebellion against the Lord of the kingdom, and therefore void. If he was still the true archbishop, because unlawfully deprived, Dr. Tillotson and his successors have been spurious bishops, having no authority from Christ, and no legal authority whatever. It follows, in this view of the case, that all the powers of ordination have ceased to exist for nearly two hundred years in the Church of England. The apostolical succession is lost, irrecoverably lost. Taking either horn of the dilemma, the High-churchman is brought face to face with certain calamity and defeat. If Sancroft and his friends were in the line of the "apostolical succession" before his deposition, then he carried it with him when he retired from Lambeth palace, and transmitted it to his followers. If Dr. Sancroft was not in the "apostolical succession" after his deposition, then the mere mandate of a king can make or mar the sovereign authority in the Church of Christ, and an act of *political* allegiance determines the character of the officers in the kingdom of God. Thus confusion and disorder, doubt and schism, and many deplorable evils, enter and disturb the peace of Jerusalem, until the equivocal rhymes describe the attitude of Churchmen:

God bless the King, our Faith's Defender;
Blessing's no harm—God bless the Pretender;
But who's the Pretender, and who's the King?
God bless my soul! that's quite another thing!*

* Life of Bishop Bathurst, vol. i., p. 17.

Chapter VI.

Chevalier Bunsen—Symbol of Unity—Controversy not an Unmixed Evil—Growth by Conflict—Charity the Bond of Union—High-church Party Illiberal—Non-jurors of Scotland—Bishop Sandford—King William and the Scotch Bishops—Episcopal Church of Scotland destroyed by the Scotch Parliament, not by King William—Statements to the contrary disproved—Macpherson's Testimony—The Restoration brings Episcopacy back to Scotland—People opposed—Terrible Persecution—Murder of Sharp—James II. dethroned—William III. rejected by the Scotch Episcopalians—Intrigues resulting in Ruin to the Hopes of the Jacobites—Burnet's Testimony—Striving to deceive the King—Failure and Repeal—Presbyterians Succeed—Non-jurors form a Secret and Outlawed Party—Final Suppression under Queen Anne—The American Candidate.

"IT is very intelligible," says Chevalier Bunsen, "that the selfish principle of nature should be especially active in the field of religion. Every society within the State, every corporation, bears within it the germ of a temptation to concentrated selfishness, by regarding the society as an end in itself, instead of a means. But this danger is particularly great in matters of religion.

"Religion is the highest divine symbol of unity, whether in the household, the tribe, the nation, or the State. It is *our* God whom we defend or avenge when we are filled with zeal against those of an opposite faith. But to appropriate what belongs to God is the very essence of all selfishness, the true fall of man, who would fain be the master of goodness and truth, not their voluntary servant. This danger grows with the deep-

ing consciousness of national unity, and the civilization which attends this consciousness. The more religion is absorbed into the mind, and is conceived as essentially bound up with the moral law of the universe and of conscience, the more will the idea of purity and godliness become attached to *our* faith, and that of impurity and ungodliness to the faith of our opponents. They are our enemies because they are despisers of God—that is, despisers of *our* God. Why else should they not worship him with *us*? Thus the natural man calls his neighbors who speak another language ἄγλωσσοι, in contrast to μέρουες ἄνθρωποι; he scornfully calls them barbarians, in contrast to the intelligent human being.”*

While we admit that these words of the German philanthropist contain a great truth, they must be qualified by another and equally important view of the subject. The tendency which leads to selfishness promotes activity, and the true interpretation of the Holy Scriptures must ever lay the greatest stress upon that charity which St. Paul tells us is always and everywhere essential to the Christian life. The love of God necessitates the love of our fellow-men, and the grace of God is always a safeguard against bigotry and intolerance. Zeal tempered by love is always a good thing, and the utmost diligence and energy in the propagation of our opinions may be compatible with a spirit of loving generosity which refuses to allow differences of opinion to operate as barriers against Christian fellowship. For this reason, because it is essentially exclusive and illiberal, the spirit of the High-church party has ever been a disturbing

* Bunsen's *Signs of the Times*, p. 166.

influence in the Christian commonwealth. It is not content to follow the dictates of personal conscience, but seeks to compel the consciences of others. Indeed, the interest manifested in behalf of men exists only so long as they are objects of strife or of conquest. When they have become proselytes, and are under the same yoke, the zeal which won them over is no longer displayed toward them. Activity is agitation; Christian life is the bending or the breaking of the will and judgment of men into conformity; and it is well if there exists a desire for more than external conformity.

In advocacy of these tenets of the High-church party, no restraints of history or of fact are sufficient to prevent very zealous men from distorting and misrepresenting those who are opposed to them. A conspicuous illustration of this remark is seen in the career of the party known in British history as the Episcopal Non-jurors of Scotland. If there has been no adequate reason for the existence of a Non-juror Church in England, there can be no adequate reason for the existence of a Non-juror party in Scotland. The extent to which the truth of history is set at naught by those who had every opportunity to know the real state of things is surprising and humiliating. Many examples might be given, but two or three will suffice.

"The Episcopal Church of Scotland," says the son and biographer of Bishop Sandford, "has an indisputable claim to all that respect to which suffering for conscience' sake can entitle a community. It is well known how, from the enjoyment of ascendancy proudly maintained, and of authority often abused, she was not only deprived of political existence, but degraded

to the condition of an outlawed sect. The change in her condition was not less sudden than complete. A single interview with royalty, it would appear, decided her fate." * This is the flippant style in which a serious writer describes an event of such momentous consequence to the liberties of his country. The "single interview with royalty" is given in a note. King William asked Rose, then Bishop of Edinburgh, to use his influence in behalf of the new government in Scotland. The Bishop was embarrassed, but answered that he would serve the King as far as law, reason, and conscience would allow him. The King turned away, and said no more to the Scotchman; and by this incident we are to believe the fate of the Scotch Episcopal Church was determined. Nevertheless, without seeming to be aware that he was contradicting himself, in the next paragraph he says: "She might indeed still have enjoyed immunity, on condition of abjuring her former allegiance, but preferring to 'stand by it in the face of all dangers and to the greatest losses,' she withdrew from legal protection, and laid herself open to the attacks of those whom recent injuries had inflamed." † In other and simpler words, she refused to take the oath of allegiance to King William, and thereby placed herself in hostility to the government of the country. For this act of political contumacy the Legislature of Scotland *suppressed* the Episcopal Church. The same power that *established*, *disestablished* it, and there was an end to the Scotch Episcopal Church.

In the "History of the Church in Scotland," a work written by a Non-juror, it is affirmed that

* Life of Bishop Sandford, vol. i., p. 34. † Ibid., p. 35.

“at the era of the Revolution (of 1688) the countenance of the State was withdrawn because the bishops could not, without being allowed time for due reflection, consent to transfer their allegiance from one sovereign to another.”* Episcopacy was overthrown, and Presbyterianism established, says the same writer “contrary to the wishes of the masses of the people.”† The most impartial historian of those times is, perhaps, James Macpherson. If he has a tendency toward either party, it is toward that of James II. He tells us in the preface to his “History of Great Britain” that the papers of the family of Brunswick-Luneburg, and those of the house of Stuart, were placed in his hands. “The new light thrown upon public transactions, the discoveries made in the secret views of parties, the certainty established with regard to the real characters of particular persons, and the undeviating justice rendered to all, will, the author hopes, atone for his defects as a writer.” These words were printed more than a hundred years ago, and time has not modified essentially the statements of this historian. Others have followed in his path, and have confirmed the story recorded in his pages.

Immediately after the Restoration—in 1660—the Presbyterian Church of Scotland was overthrown. The tidal-wave of popular opinion that brought Charles II. back to the throne of his fathers gave no time for reflection, and no means for resistance to the schemes of those who sought to take advantage of the King’s popularity. Episcopacy was established in Scotland in a similar way to its introduction in the time of

* Quoted in Bailey’s *Duties of the Christian Ministry*, p. 183.

† *Ibid.*, p. 186.

James I. The Presbyterian system was covered with ignominy in the defeat of the Covenant and its adherents. A subservient Legislature voted any measure into law whenever the King required it at their hands. But the people of Scotland were not Episcopalians. They loved the doctrines, the discipline, and the traditions of John Knox and his hardy, zealous, spiritual followers. In vain did the Scotch Episcopalians labor to establish uniformity. With brutality unparalleled—except, perhaps, in the worst days of the Spanish Inquisition—the clergy and the law-makers combined to root out the Presbyterian “heresy.” Heavy fines were imposed upon persons who met in “conventicles” for religious purposes, and field-preachers were punished with death. The right to govern the Church was declared *inherent* in the Crown—a principle which was in a few years to prove destructive to Episcopacy in Scotland. For nearly thirty years the bloody work of forcing the Scotch to “conformity” proceeded. The red-handed Sharp, Archbishop of St. Andrews, was murdered by the incensed populace—an act of vengeance that may not be excused, and yet can scarcely be condemned when we consider his blood-thirsty character and savage conduct. Perjury, treachery, and murder were laid at his door, and not without proof of his guilt in all particulars. But his assassination brought on an Iliad of woes to the persecuted Scotch. Fire and flame, the shriek of the dying and the psalm of praise, the voice of the field-preacher and the click of the musket of grenadiers who opened fire upon masses of innocent men, women, and children—all these were mingled together on the hill-sides and in the plains of Scotland.

It is not easy to determine the number of lives sacrificed in this terrible strife of nearly thirty years' duration. In seven years of this period the number exceeded several thousand, and a large volume* is devoted to their memory by their compatriots. There can be no reply to testimony which gives the facts, the names, the dates, with as much exactitude and care as if the proceedings were taken as formally as the records of a court-room. This is the "ascendancy proudly maintained," and the "authority often abused." Mild terms, indeed, to describe the oppression of a hireling soldiery and the vindictive cruelty of monsters in human shape! "Ruinous fines were appointed to be levied on those who met to worship in houses," says Macpherson, "but field-preachers and their hearers were to be punished with death. Laws that are too severe defeat their own purpose. The fanatics were outrageous, and became, through persecution, more enamored of their own tenets."† "The High-church party, possessed of the power of the government, turned its whole force upon wretched fanatics, whose desperate zeal ought to be the subject of pity more than the object of punishment. Rapacity and blind revenge were seen on one side, insolence and madness on the other. A scene of pitiful misery prevailed; oppression without profit, and an obstinate opposition for no worthy cause; a feeble government, who deemed violence authority; an ignorant populace, without a single idea of political freedom, struck with madness by enthusiastic opinions in religion."‡

* A Cloud of Witnesses of those who Suffered for the Truth in Scotland, between the years 1681 and 1688. † History of Great Britain, vol. i., p. 159. ‡ Ibid., p. 378.

This was the state of affairs in Scotland when the bigotry and fanaticism of James II. produced the Revolution of 1688. A great majority of the Scotch people were enemies to Episcopacy.* As soon as William III. had been acknowledged the lawful King of Great Britain by the English Parliament, the Scotch convention was called, and two letters—one from James II. and the other from William III. were laid before the representatives of the people. After hearing both of the royal claimants, the convention declared that James had abdicated the throne, and that William III. was the rightful King of Great Britain. The party of James—called the Jacobites—was the High-church party, which was the whole body of Episcopalians in Scotland. The standard of rebellion was raised, and the partisans of James were defeated on the field of battle. “During the military operations in the north of Scotland, the Parliament sat in continual ferment at Edinburgh. A violent opposition rose upon various grounds. The passions of the discontented were inflamed by men who had been disappointed in their views of ambition. A majority appeared against the Crown. They passed an act for the abolition of prelacy.”† This act of disestablishment was not the act of the King, but of a Scotch Parliament whose majority was opposed to the administration of King William. They fought his measures step by step, until the King authorized his representative, the commissioner, to agree to any law, with regard to the government of the Church, which might seem best to the majority. “The hopes of the Jacobites were destroyed by this concession.

* History of Great Britain, vol. i., p. 435. † Ibid., p. 556.

The King's supremacy over the Church was rescinded by an act which received the royal assent on the 26th of April, 1690. The Presbyterians demanded nothing which the commissioner was not empowered to grant.* "The Jacobite members, yielding in the meantime to their own fears, left the commissioner with a clear majority in Parliament. He gave the royal assent to a bill establishing Presbytery as the national Church of Scotland." Thus, in 1690, more than eighteen months after William III. came to the throne, the Episcopal Church of Scotland was overthrown. It was not the act of the King, but of the Scotch Parliament. King William had exercised much patience, and had treated his Scotch subjects of the Episcopal party with kindness from the beginning. "The bishops, and those who adhered to them," says Burnet, "having left the convention, the Presbyterians had a majority of voices to carry every thing as they pleased, how unreasonable soever. And upon this, the abolishing Episcopacy in Scotland was made a necessary article of the new settlement." The King, in answer to inquiries from Scotland, assured the Episcopalians that "he would do all he could to preserve them, granting a full toleration to the Presbyterians; but this was in case they concurred in the new settlement of the kingdom. For if they opposed that, and if by a great majority in Parliament resolutions should be taken against them, the King could not make a war for them."† But the infatuated bishops, believing that a "speedy revolution would be brought about in favor of King James, resolved to adhere

* History of Great Britain, vol. i., p. 586. † Burnet's History of His Own Time, vol. iii., p. 31.

firmly to his interests; so they declaring in a body with so much zeal, in opposition to the new settlement, it was not possible for the King to preserve that government there; all those who expressed their zeal for him being equally zealous against that order.”* This is the language of the Bishop of Salisbury—a man whose ecclesiastical station, as well as his principles, qualified him for an impartial judgment. He corresponded with the Scotch bishops, and assured them that the existence of their Church depended upon their acquiescence in the will of the people as expressed in the Revolution of 1688. They resisted the popular will, and fell victims to their own insensate zeal for a prince who was an uncompromising enemy to the Protestant religion.

“The proceedings in Scotland cast a great load on the King,” continues Burnet. “He could not hinder the change of the government of that Church without putting all his affairs in great disorder. The Episcopal party went almost universally into King James’s interests; so that the Presbyterians were the only party that the King had in that kingdom. The King did indeed assure us, and myself in particular, that he would restrain and moderate the violence of the Presbyterians.”† The folly of the infatuated men who were hazarding their Church and their religious liberty for the vain hope of recalling a popish King who had fled from his country, seems to be almost incredible. But every step of the English Government which promised relief or assistance to the Episcopalians was met by some wretched blunder on their part, or some act of political disobedience which rendered the most benevo-

* Burnet’s *History of His Own Time*, vol. iii., p. 31. † *Ibid.*, p. 39.

lent purposes impracticable. The methods employed by men who were called *bishops* of the Church were suited to only the basest of politicians. "The Jacobites persuaded all their party to go to the Parliament, and to take the oaths; for many of the nobility stood off and would not own the King, nor swear to him. Great pains were taken by Patterson, one of their archbishops, to persuade them to take the oaths, but on design to break them; for he thought by that means they could have a majority in Parliament, though some of the laity were too honest to agree to such advices. But with all these wicked arts they were not able to carry a majority."* This would seem to be the extremity of wickedness and folly, but there are other facts which reveal a lower degree of degradation. Pretending to be reconciled to the principles of the Revolution, "they undertook to the King that if the Episcopal clergy could be assured of his protection, they would all acknowledge and serve him. They did not desire that the King should make any step toward the changing the government that was settled there; they only desired that Episcopal ministers might continue to serve in those places that liked them best, and that no man should be brought into trouble for his opinion as to the government of the Church; and that such Episcopal men as were willing to mix with the Presbyterians in their judicatories should be admitted without any severe imposition in point of opinion. This looked so fair, and agreed so well with the King's own sense of things, that he very easily hearkened to it; and I did believe that it was sincerely meant, so I promoted it with great zeal;

* Burnet's History of His Own Time, vol. iii., p. 85.

though we afterward came to see that all this was an artifice of the Jacobites to engage the King to disgust the Presbyterians, and by losing them, or at least rendering them remiss in his service, they reckoned they would soon be masters of that kingdom.”* This extraordinary duplicity excelled the arts of King James himself, for on receiving a statement from a messenger that their taking the oaths was done only to serve his cause, James replied that he could not consent to an unlawful act, but if any should take the oaths in order to serve him, it should not be remembered against them. In other words, if they saw proper to perjure themselves in order to aid him, while he would not advise them to do it, he would not punish them for the perjury.

To pursue the history of the non-juring party in Scotland for fifty years is to repeat over and again the story of treasonable plots and efforts at rebellion, meditated or attempted. Never in the history of English politics, was there a record more fruitful in the despicable arts of the demagogue, and in pertinacious movements whose only result would have been the overthrow of religious and civil liberty in Great Britain. Queen Anne was a Stuart, and would have favored the Scotch Episcopal party if their conduct had rendered any royal favor compatible with the safety of the kingdom. So far from this being the case it was necessary, in 1703, to confirm the Presbyterian form of government. By their opposition to the government the Episcopal party compelled the royal commissioner to yield to the solicitations of the Presbyterians. “By this all the hopes of the Episcopal

* Burnet's History of His Own Time, vol. iii., p. 101.

party were lost; and every thing in the Church did not only continue in the same state in which it was during the former reign, but the Presbyterians got a new law in their favor which gave them as firm a settlement and as full a security as law could give. For an act passed, not only confirming the claim of rights upon which the crown had been offered to the late King, one of its articles being against prelacy, and for a parity in the Church; but it was declared high treason to endeavor any alteration of it. It had often been proposed to the late King to pass this into an act, but he would never consent to it. He said he had taken the crown on the terms in that claim, and that therefore he would never make a breach on any part of it; but he could not bind his successors by making it a perpetual law. Thus a ministry that carried all matters relating to the Church to so great a height, yet with other views, gave a fatal stroke to the Episcopal interest in Scotland, to which the late King would never give way.”*

We have in this extract one of those instances of special retribution which sometimes overtakes the schemes of placemen and politicians. In order to effect the restoration of an unworthy Stuart King, the Episcopalians forfeited the favor of the people and the emoluments of the government of Scotland, and from the hands of a monarch belonging to the Stuart family the hope of the Episcopal party received its death-blow. Hereafter, until successful treason becomes triumphant revolution, the Church establishment of Scotland must remain Presbyterian in its form. The Act of Union, adopted in 1706, discontin-

* Burnet's History, vol. iv., p. 21.

ued the Scotch Parliament, transferring all of its powers to the English Legislature. Of this Act of Union, Bishop Burnet says: "The advantages that were offered to Scotland, in the whole frame of it, were so great and so visible that nothing but the consideration of the safety that was to be procured by it to England could have brought the English to agree to a project that in every branch of it was much more favorable to the Scotch nation."*

But the extinction of the Episcopal Church of Scotland did not interfere with those persons who desired to worship God according to the forms of the liturgy of the Church of England. In 1712, a special act of Parliament removed all doubts upon this point. "A toleration was proposed for the Episcopal clergy," says Burnet, "who would use the liturgy of the Church of England. This seemed so reasonable that no opposition was made to it."† The only condition that was attached to this act of toleration was that the clergyman should take the oath of abjuration; in other words, the oath of allegiance to the reigning sovereign. If any man can see the appearance of persecution in a law that requires him to keep faith with the government that protects him, he must have a strange perversity of moral vision. To enjoy the benefits of a system of government, and to be protected in every respect, while trying to bring about the destruction of that government, can never be claimed as a right by any man or society of men.

We have, then, a distinct view of this "persecuted Church." "There is not to be found in any Protestant nation," says one of these non-juring clergymen,

* Burnet's History, vol. iv., p. 167. † Ibid., p. 356.

“an example of penal laws at once so oppressive and insidious as those of which the history has now been described.” * But in what particulars were these laws oppressive? There was a son of James II., known as the Pretender to the throne of Great Britain. This prince had been acknowledged by France as the true King of England. Funds were supplied to him, and many persons among the discontented politicians of England resorted to his residence abroad, forming plans for his return to England. Scotland presented an open gate-way for the entrance of an invading army that might be sent from France or Spain. An immense army and navy would be needed to protect England from invasion, if in Scotland a party hostile to the Protestant succession should obtain a foothold. The Scotch Episcopalians were not “persecuted” in any proper sense. It is folly to say that the government of England, with an Episcopal Church established, could be opposed to an Episcopal Church in Scotland. It was a *political*, and not a *religious*, question. The only religious feature involved was that of maintaining the *Protestant* religion, in preference to the Roman Catholic. If the Scotch Episcopalians preferred popery to Lutheranism, they have no claim upon Protestants for sympathy in their tribulations.

But the fact is that they provoked the English Government to severity by their frequent attempts at rebellion. In 1715, and again in 1745, the Pretender landed in Scotland, and gathered an army for the invasion of England. The Scotch Episcopalians joined their fortunes with his, and shared the fate of criminals who fail in enterprises which involve the life of

* Duties of the Ministry, p. 193.

a monarch, a dynasty, or a nation. "Illegal Episcopal meeting-houses" were those of the Jacobites, and of Jacobites alone. Episcopal churches using the English liturgy were as accessible to the Scotchman in Scotland as Presbyterian churches were to the Scotchman in London. If these Jacobite Episcopalians were not always credited for sincerity in taking the oath of allegiance to the house of Hanover, it is due to the duplicity of one of their archbishops, who advised his people to perjure themselves in order to carry their point. Therefore, notwithstanding the fact that some of these "meeting-houses" were registered, and thus legalized, after "the rising of 1745," a subsequent Act of Parliament amended the former statute, and required "that no letters of orders not granted by some bishop of the Church of England or Ireland should, after the 22d of September, be sufficient to qualify any pastor or minister of any Episcopal meeting in Scotland, whether the same had been registered before or since the 1st of September, 1746; and that every such registration, whether made before or since, should be null and void." "This act, it is manifest," says Dr. Russell, the Non-juror, "was directly leveled against the religion of Scottish Episcopalians, for it precluded them from the privilege of political repentance."* It was not leveled at the *religion*, but at the *politics*, of the Non-jurors, and seems to have been a very wise, prudent measure. Any English bishop would authorize an Episcopal clergyman to preach the gospel and administer the sacraments to Episcopalians in Scotland, provided the minister was not an avowed enemy of the government under which

* Duties of the Ministry, p. 192.

he lived. What more could any one ask? Episcopacy, as a ruling Church power, was overthrown in Scotland, and could never rise again; but Episcopacy, as one of the methods of gathering the people of the Lord into the fold of Christ, was as free to act and prosper in Scotland as it was in England.

“From the reign of Queen Anne to the close of the last century,” says the biographer of Bishop Sandford, “the penalties were in force, and though the lenity of a benevolent monarch restrained their execution, the Episcopalians of Scotland were still an oppressed remnant, who owed their safety to privacy and oblivion. They were not, indeed, compelled to seek refuge in caves or deserts, but they met in private rooms and concealed closes for congregational worship, and avoided all display of outward ceremonial. Yet they maintained a separate communion, and preserved inviolate Episcopal succession; they endured persecution and survived neglect, and persevered in their hopeless attachment to the last. Their allegiance expired only with its object. On the demise of the heir of the house of Stuart, in 1788, their political scruples were removed. They acknowledged the right, as they had felt the power, of the house of Brunswick; they hastened, with a free conscience, to present their homage, and, with a sincerity which none could question, to promise an attachment as devoted to the reigning family as they had shown to the ancient line.”*

This writer confesses that allegiance to the house of Stuart was the only principle which distinguished the Scotch Episcopalians as a party. When the

* *Memoirs of Bishop Sandford*, vol. i., p. 36.

last member of the Stuart family died, they hastened to present their homage to George III.! "After, therefore, a dutiful address to the King on his recovery in 1789, three of the bishops repaired to the English metropolis, to seek redress from the great council of the nation. Very different was the condition of these lowly men from that of the last Scottish bishop who had been admitted to White Hall. Unknown almost by name to the great officers of state, and equally so to many of their brother prelates—strangers alike to pomp and etiquette—they met not with success equal either to the merit of their cause, or to their own expectations."

Thus does the biographer lament the impoverished condition of a proud and once persecuting Church. A great difference there was, indeed, between the visit of these three Non-jurors to Whitehall and that of the bishop whom this writer declares decided the fate of Scotch Episcopacy. Whatever of truth there may be in the alleged interview between King William and the Bishop of Edinburgh, it cannot be questioned that these were sad pilgrims from Scotland, in search of relief from penalties which were no longer operative, because the Pretender was no longer in existence. "The prejudices of a great man, better versed in the temporal than in the spiritual rights of the Church, was the effectual hinderance to their suit. A slight informality committed by the bishops; a want of information which the Lord Chancellor, Thurlow, did not care to obtain; a weight of business more important than the relief of a few oppressed individuals, induced him first to move for the postponement of the bill, and after-

ward to continue his opposition to it for two successive sessions.”*

In plainer terms, Lord Thurlow denied that there was such a thing in being as the Scotch Episcopal Church. Planting himself upon the historical fact that the institution once bearing that name had been destroyed by Act of Parliament in the year 1690, he could not be expected to recognize the three Scotchmen who called themselves “bishops” of a Church that had been dead a hundred years. As a lawyer, and an English chancellor, he could know nothing of an alleged succession of men whose sole *raison d’être* was not a spiritual one, but consisted of *political* allegiance to a family that had been declared base and pernicious enemies to the kingdom of Great Britain. There were not a few of the friends of the defeated bishops who reproached them for their failure; but by dint of an association and a committee, a bill was carried through Parliament in the year 1792, which relieved the Non-jurors from the penalties of the law. But the liberated remnant, which hastened with the “free conscience to present their homage,” “whose sincerity none could question,” continued, with a perversity which seems inexplicable, to refuse to take the oath of allegiance or to subscribe to the Thirty-nine Articles of the Church of England. With a supreme indifference to consistency, which appears to be constitutional in this writer, in one place he declares it to be the *duty* of an Episcopalian to “render obedience to authority in Church *and State*;” yet he proceeds, upon the next page, to declare that the Non-jurors, notwithstanding the lenity of the government, refused to

*Life of Sandford, vol. i., p. 37.

perform that duty, at least with respect to the State. "And the clergy too," he says, "were virtually relieved; for though still liable to a mitigated penalty, unless taking the oaths of allegiance and abjuration, and subscribing the Thirty-nine Articles of the English Church, *and though none of them immediately conformed to either condition*, no countenance was given to informers, and the Episcopalian minister might safely confide in the benevolence of the public and in the mild execution of the laws. The oath of abjuration, as far as it was retrospective, the existing bishops and presbyters of the old Episcopal Church of Scotland, could not indeed conscientiously take; and though concurring in the doctrines of the English Church, as expressed in her Articles, and adopting her ritual—with one exception—they did not see the expediency of subscribing her valuable confessional, or the possibility of separating the conditions required by the act." *

We have traced this outline of the history of a remarkable schism which was not more fortunate than that which took its rise concurrently in England. With the Pretender's death passed away the reason for the existence of a non-juring party. There were a few Episcopal congregations that were served by pastors who had claimed communion with the Church of England. The Scotch Non-jurors had no Confession of Faith, and hence, when the Pretender died, they had no bond of union among themselves except the memory of political antagonism to a dynasty that had triumphed over civil and ecclesiastical opposition. "As the Episcopal Church of Scotland had not given

* Life of Sandford, vol. i., p. 42.

the pledge demanded of her, and had not adopted the confessional of the Church of England, it could scarcely be expected that her sons should unite with a communion of the orthodoxy of which they might indeed be assured, but which could not refer to a permanent standard.”* A synod was held in 1803, at which the Thirty-nine Articles were adopted, and permission was granted for the use of the English liturgy—the Scotch party having used the communion service of Edward VI. Thus, in 1803, there was a reorganization which placed Episcopacy in Scotland upon a firm foundation as a Church of Christ. For a hundred years without articles of religion and without a liturgy, holding its meetings in secret, and subjecting its ministers to the heavy penalties of the law, the political party known as the Non-jurors of Scotland preserved their existence as a separate faction; and in 1784, by the act of three men who claimed to be bishops of a Church suppressed and destroyed by law, the apostolical succession of the house of Stuart was conveyed to Dr. Seabury, an enterprising citizen of Connecticut. In a private house, by men unknown to the civil authorities, except as violators of the laws, in the face of the statute of præmunire, three clergymen of Scotland undertook to do what the Archbishop of Canterbury had refused to do. Standing upon the platform of relentless opposition to the Revolution of 1688, which gave civil and religious liberty to Great Britain, these representatives of a moribund political association volunteer to transmit episcopal authority in the Church of Christ to a citizen of a republic just emancipated from political bondage!

* Life of Sandford, vol. i., p. 44.

Chapter VII.

M. Guizot—High-church Theories—Church and State—Samuel Seabury—Secretary of a Petitioning Convention—Tory Principles—Outspoken Loyalty to King George—Offensive Partisanship—A Secret Convention of Ten Tory Clergymen—Candidates for the Episcopacy, Leaming and Seabury—The Latter Consents to Apply to England for Orders—Independence Produces Consternation in Episcopal Circles in New York—Patriotism of Dr. White—Chaplain to Congress—A Well-kept Secret—Letter to White—Seabury Arrives in London—Vain Efforts—Working a Legislature—Seabury not the Choice of the Church—Twelve Months of Useless Effort—The Secret Movement Discovered by Dr. White—A Slight Error in the “Memoirs of the Church”—Dr. Berkeley—Delay—Disgust—Goes to Edinburgh—Seabury Ordained in a Private House—Statute of *Præmunire*—Protest from America—Dr. Chandler—Errors Corrected.

“**N**OTHING tortures history more than logic,” says M. Guizot, Prime-minister of France. “No sooner does the human mind seize upon an idea than it draws from it all its possible consequences; makes it produce in imagination all that it would in reality be capable of producing, and then figures it down in history with all the extravagant additions which itself has conjured up. This, however, is nothing like the truth. Events are not so prompt in their consequences as the human mind in its deductions.”* These remarks are applicable to all history, but to none do they apply with so much force as to the historical proofs alleged in behalf of High-church theories. A theory is invented which makes the Church

* History of Civilization, vol. i., p. 117.

of Christ a machine, arranged and put in motion in the apostolic age, and to be kept in exercise according to certain absolute, inflexible principles. Our Lord established a Church. In that Church he placed three orders of ministers, and for each order a definite method of investiture in authority. Conforming to these principles in every particular, allowing for no lapse, mistake, neglect, or perversion of the original mode of instituting these orders of the ministry, the Church has descended to our day, having the three orders essential to its constitution and ministerial authority transmitted through them from the apostles to our own times.

The author of the "Life of Bishop Sandford" tells us that Bishop Horsley, "as a Churchman, considered a connection with the State in no way vital to a valid episcopacy. As a Churchman, too, he distinguished between the political and ecclesiastical power of bishops. And every one who regards episcopal government as something more than a mere human polity, entertains this distinction, and is ready to avow that he is bound in conscience to respect the spiritual far more than the temporal authority of his diocesan."* If connection with the State be "essential to a valid episcopacy," there was no episcopacy for three hundred years of the Christian era, for the Church had no political power prior to A.D. 325. Who does not see, then, that the political power of bishops is "a mere human polity?" Who does not know that this power has been abused in every instance in which it has been given? What shall be said of a so-called *Church* which complains of persecution, because, having been

* Life of Sandford, vol. i., p. 39.

defeated in its attempts at resistance to the popular will, it presumes to raise the standard of political rebellion against the established government of the kingdom?

Let us apply a little of the torture of logic to certain historical events which occurred a hundred years ago.

The Rev. Samuel Seabury was a native of Connecticut. His father was a Congregational minister, but turned Episcopalian; and the son, Samuel, although baptized by a Congregationalist minister, was reared among Episcopalian influences, and began at an early age to serve the "Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts." In 1753, at the age of twenty-four, Mr. Seabury was ordained deacon on the 21st and priest on the 23d of December. Installed in the Province of New Jersey, we find him from time to time engaged in the fruitless effort to obtain an American episcopate. In 1766 he was the secretary of a committee of a dozen clergymen who renewed the appeal for a resident bishop, Dr. Chandler becoming the spokesman of the party. His "Appeal" occasioned the controversy of 1768, recorded in the *American Whig* and similar publications.

After the War of the Revolution began to gravitate toward the independence of the colonies, the clergymen of Connecticut—ten in number—met in the little village of Woodbury, at the house of the Rev. John Rutgers Marshall, a missionary of the "Venerable Society." True to the hand that had fed them, but false to the country that gave them birth, some of these clergymen had become notorious for their loyalty to George III. The right to their opinions, it is

probable, would have been conceded to them by the patriotic party if they had refused to become active partisans. "Ask the aged people on these shores," says Edwin Hall, "who were the most dreaded foes of freedom here? Who were the guides of their enemies in their nightly incursions for plunder and rapine? Who stole upon their dwellings, to seize the husbands, or fathers, or sons, and to carry them off to the jails and prison-ships, many of them never to return? Who ambushed the sanctuary on the Sabbath, and with bayonets invaded the house of God, to seize upon the unarmed worshipers? The answer will declare the actual influence of the prelatical system, in the days that tried men's souls." "The day that saw the town of Norwalk laid in ashes saw also the Rector of St. Paul's retiring with the marauders of the British fleet." *

These were scarcely the class of men to initiate a movement for the establishment of a Christian Church in the new republic. Nevertheless, these clergymen, ten in number, met in secret conclave in the village of Woodbury, in the last week of March, 1783. "No laymen were admitted to the gathering," says Dr. Beardsley, "and it was so secret as to be known only to the clergy. Who of the fourteen in the State were absent cannot now be ascertained, for, though Mr. Jarvis was the secretary, no minutes were kept to be made public, and consequently the names were not preserved. The fear of opposition, and perhaps the fear of not having the hearty concurrence of their lay brethren, led to the secrecy of the movement." † "On the festival of the Annunciation, without a formal election, they

* Puritans and Their Principles, p. 400. † Life of Seabury, p. 63.

selected two persons, the Rev. Jeremiah Leaming and the Rev. Samuel Seabury, as suitable, either of them, to go to England and obtain, if possible, episcopal consecration.”* These gentlemen were in New York, under the shelter of the British army. Mr. Leaming had been “the faithful missionary at Norwalk,” Dr. Beardsley tells us, for twenty-one years. Can it be possible that this Mr. Leaming was the Rector of St. Paul’s who accompanied the British troops at the burning of Norwalk? It is more than likely, for the other gentleman selected as a candidate for the episcopacy was at that moment chaplain in a British regiment. No wonder, then, that “no laymen were admitted” to this gathering—ten royalist clergymen selecting candidates for the episcopacy in a Church to be established for the republican citizens of the United States!

Mr. Leaming declined the office. The pilgrimage was a long and hazardous one, and he was getting old. “He was well known to the Connecticut clergy, and a long intercourse with him had won their entire respect and confidence.” But the respect of British and Tory clergymen was quite a different thing from the confidence that American republicans are supposed to place in their spiritual advisers. Dr. Seabury was a younger man by twelve years, but he was in every way as objectionable to the patriots of Connecticut. They were just emerging from a bloody war of seven years’ duration. They could not take their political enemies and oppressors as their spiritual guides. Dr. Seabury had been visited by the “Sons of Liberty,” and his retreat was more hasty than dignified.

* *Life of Seabury*, p. 64.

As early as the fall of 1776 he took refuge within the lines of the King's army. When the royal troops retired from Westchester he followed them. In February, 1778, he was appointed chaplain to the King's American regiment, and continued in this relation until his services were no longer needed, and then retired on half-pay.

The surrender of Lord Cornwallis at Yorktown, in October, 1781, had discouraged the ministers of George III., and signs of peace began to appear early in 1782. There was nothing definite, however, until August, when General Washington received intelligence that negotiations for a general peace had been entered into at Paris. This was a signal for alarm to Seabury and his brethren. "It is impossible," wrote the Rev. John Payne to the Society, August 14, 1782, "for words to describe the universal consternation which was produced here by the communication of a letter from his majesty's Commissioner to General Washington, in consequence of directions from England, informing him of the King's command to his Minister Plenipotentiary at Paris, to propose the independence of the thirteen provinces in the first instance, instead of making it the subject of a general treaty."* "The Church" was in danger by the triumph of the patriot party. The Philadelphia clergy—that is to say, the Rev. Dr. White—"not only rushed headlong into the rebellion themselves, but perverted the judgment, and soured the tempers, and inflamed the passions of the people by sermons and orations, both from the pulpit and the press." So wrote Dr. Seabury five years before. But now the tables were turned; White

* Life of Seabury, p. 55.

was chaplain to the rebel Congress, Seabury to a Tory regiment. The day of reckoning had come, and a little of the wisdom of this world was required. Some of the Tory brethren were doomed to emigrate. Confiscation of their property was inevitable. Their conduct had made it so. But Dr. Seabury, like the unjust steward, had an opportunity to provide against the evil day. If he could make the trip to Europe, and return with a bishop's staff, his political record would be condoned and forgotten. He had a formidable rival. Dr. White, by all the considerations of justice, as well as good policy, would be a candidate for the episcopacy in the Church yet to be established. He was a Whig, and had entered into the republican cause without reserve. He was, beyond doubt, the most prominent man among the Episcopalians in America. He had, moreover, during the war published a pamphlet, in which he proposed to organize an Episcopal Church without waiting for the "apostolical succession."

This incident furnished an admirable opportunity for the clergy of Connecticut and their candidate. Dr. Seabury accepted the nomination, and matters proceeded with equal energy and secrecy. Two or three clergymen in New York were taken into confidence. High-sounding phrases, such as "Clergy of Connecticut" and "Convention of the Clergy," were employed in the address to the Archbishop of York, the See of Canterbury being at that time vacant. The document is dated April 21, 1783. Four days later these ten clergymen at Woodbury address a letter of remonstrance to Dr. White concerning his pamphlet. They enter into a controversy with him in regard to

his views on the subject of ordination. "You plead necessity," say the remonstrants, "and argue that the best writers in the Church admit of Presbyterian ordination, where Episcopal cannot be had. To prove this, you quote concessions from the venerable Hooker and Dr. Chandler, which their exuberant charity to the reformed Churches abroad led them to make.'*

Dr. White answers their letter in due season, and it is very refreshing, at this point of time, to observe how studiously the Connecticut brethren keep their secret from the knowledge of the Philadelphia clergyman. In the simplicity of his heart, with as much of verbal candor as his diplomatic style of writing would admit, he tells them that the prospect of peace will render the measures proposed in his pamphlet unnecessary. But not a syllable escapes from the Connecticut brethren to the effect that *they* have a contrivance that will cut the Gordian knot. Dr. Seabury had been furnished with testimonials, signed by three clergymen in New York, one of whom is the man who refused to leave out the prayer for the King at the request of General Washington. Dr. Ingliss must move to a more congenial climate, but he does a kind act to his brother Tory before his departure.

Dr. Seabury arrived in London on the 7th of July, 1783. He had taken time by the forelock. The British troops were still in New York. A week after his arrival the Doctor writes to his brethren in Connecticut. He found the Bishop of London very agreeable to the scheme, but unwilling to take the lead in it. "The old policy of preferring political expediency to religious right," says Dr. Beardsley, "still paralyzed

* White's Memoirs, p. 337.

the energies of the Church of England, and diminished the fervency of her zeal and the extent of her charity." "My greatest fear arises from the matter becoming public, as it now must, and that the Dissenters here will prevail on your government to apply against it. This, I think, would effectually crush it, at least as far as it relates to Connecticut." * Dr. Seabury writes after that fashion to his friends. He is trying to get Esau's birthright, and is afraid that Isaac will find it out. Rebecca must keep a sharp lookout, if any detective gets upon his track. "You will, therefore, do well to attend to this circumstance yourselves, and *get such of your friends as you can trust* to find out should any such intelligence come from hence. In that case, I think it would be best to avow your design, and try what strength you can muster in the Assembly to support it." †

The biographer of Bishop Hobart tells us that "the Archbishop of Canterbury declined consecrating Dr. Seabury on this ground, among others, that he was not the choice of the Church at large." ‡ So, it seems, the secret convention of ten men was discovered, after all their efforts to escape detection. But the correspondence between Dr. Seabury and his convention agents on this side of the water is remarkable in many respects. His Grace of Canterbury is well disposed at the beginning, but he is afraid of several things. He has no right to send a bishop to Connecticut. If he sends him, they will not receive him. If they receive him, they will not support him. Besides he cannot be ordained unless he takes the oaths of allegiance and supremacy, and that an American

* Life of Seabury, p. 88. † Ibid. ‡ Life of Hobart, p. 85.

citizen cannot do. In order to break the back of one of these objections, the friends in Connecticut were instructed to get a resolution of the Legislature permitting a bishop to reside among them. But this letter must be properly *interpreted* in order to have the desired effect. If it could bear the interpretation of a *request* from the Assembly of Connecticut, a great deal would be accomplished.

After so long a time spent in wearisome interviews with his Grace of Canterbury and divers others, a new step was devised by the brethren in Connecticut. The clergy met in convention on the 13th of January, 1784, and appointed a committee "to collect the opinions of the leading members of the Assembly concerning an application by the clergy of the Episcopal Church in Connecticut for the legal protection of a bishop for said Church, when they shall be able to procure one agreeable to the common rights of Christians, as these rights are now claimed and understood by all denominations of Christians in the State."* The leading members were consulted, and the committee were informed that an act of Assembly had been passed, in which all denominations were placed upon an equal footing, and that under this statute their bishop would have the same "protection" that other ministers enjoyed. The Connecticut Legislature was not disposed, however, to permit its name and authority to be used in effecting a call upon the Archbishop of Canterbury or any one else. The letter containing this act was forwarded to Dr. Seabury, and by him shown to the bishops. The letter raised the writers in the estimation of the English prelates, but did nothing more.

* Life of Seabury, p. 93.

Twelve months expired, and the candidate for consecration was making the rounds, from Canterbury to London, from London to York, from York to Canterbury again. At last it was discovered that the bishops would expose themselves to the statute of præmunire if they ordained Dr. Seabury without an Act of Parliament! To Parliament, then, the Doctor turned, and began a crusade against that venerable fortress of English law, liberty, and grandeur. Dr. Seabury worked and waited, and the Act of Parliament came; but, alas! it was not at all to his purpose. It authorized the Bishop of London to admit foreign candidates to the order of deacon and priest, but gave no permission to consecrate a bishop for Connecticut or for any of the American States. Human patience could last no longer.

Meantime this whole affair, the correspondence, the siege at the doors of the bishops and archbishops, had been kept such a profound secret that Dr. White knew not a word of it for fourteen months after the enterprise began. The ten or a dozen persons in possession of the secret in March, 1783, had kept it sacredly until an occasion compelled a confession of the whole matter. In the city of Brunswick, New Jersey, in May, 1784, a few clergymen of New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania met for the purpose of adopting measures concerning a society for the support of widows and children of deceased clergymen. The opportunity was a favorable one for consultation among the friends of episcopacy, and the first day of the meeting was devoted to the discussion of the principles of ecclesiastical union. "The next morning," says Dr. White, "the author was taken aside, before

the meeting, by Mr. Benjamin Moore, who expressed the wish of himself and others that nothing should be further urged upon the subject, as they found themselves peculiarly circumstanced, in consequence of their having joined the clergy of Connecticut in their application for the consecration of a bishop. This brought to the knowledge of the clergy from Philadelphia what they had not known, that Dr. Samuel Seabury, of the State of New York, who had sailed for England just before the evacuation of New York by the British troops, carried with him a petition to the English bishops for his consecration.”*

It may be possible to reconcile this conduct with the dictates of moral honesty. Much depends upon the standard by which any given action is to be tested. If there be such a thing as a *pious* fraud, the Jesuitical doctrine that “the end sanctifies the means” may excuse or extenuate the faults and sins of Protestants as well as of Romanists. But it is sufficient to yield our personal sense of truth and dignity to the requirements of inexorable policy, without raising upon the ruins of a wrecked conscience a standard whereby we are to acquit or condemn our fellow-men. It is because the American Methodists refused to become parties to a transaction of this kind that the amiable but misguided brother of the founder of Methodism pronounced a strong but harmless anathema against them. For *his* sins against canonical obedience High-churchmen have a plenary indulgence, because he fur-

* White's Memoirs, p. 84. It was not “just before” the evacuation of New York that Dr. Seabury sailed. He reached London July 7, and the British troops left the city on the 25th of November, 1783, more than *five months* after the departure of Dr. Seabury for London.

nished them with a timely epigram that has served as a substitute for argument and reason for more than a hundred years.

We return to Dr. Seabury. While he was writing and hoping, working and despairing in London, Dr. Berkeley, the second son of the famous Bishop of Cloyne, had appointed himself an ambassador to the Non-jurors of Scotland. He asks the question, "Can any proper persons be found who, with the spirit of confessors, would convey the great blessing of the Protestant episcopacy from the persecuted Church of Scotland to the struggling, persecuted Protestant Episcopalian worshipers in America?" Shades of Cranmer, Ridley, and Latimer! "The persecuted Protestant Episcopalian worshipers in America!" Such absurdities as this bring all history and Church integrity into question. There is not in the annals of America an instance of "persecution" in which an Episcopalian suffered the loss of liberty, property, or life, on account of his religion. But the warm-hearted Irishman did not cease his well-meant efforts until the Scotch bishops consented to ordain Dr. Seabury.

"Unhappily the connection of this Church (of England) with the State is so intimate," he writes, "that the bishops can do little without the consent of the ministry, and the ministry have refused to permit a bishop to be consecrated for Connecticut, or for any other of the thirteen States, without the formal request, or at least consent, of Congress, which there is no chance of obtaining, and which the clergy would not apply for were the chance ever so good." Thus does the candidate despair of success in England. He is still receiving a salary from the "Venerable

Society," and there are still other sources of his income, which will be mentioned hereafter. He has had an eye, however, in all this business, to the patronage of the Society and its employés in Connecticut. "I indeed think it my duty to conduct the matter in such a manner as shall risk the salaries which the missionaries in Connecticut receive from the Society here as little as possible, and I persuade myself it may be done so as to make that risk next to nothing. With respect to my own salary, if the Society choose to withdraw it, I am ready to part with it."* In the same letter, within a dozen lines of these words just quoted, he has boasted of more than forty Episcopal congregations in the State, and in these there are at least forty thousand persons—"a body too large to be needlessly affronted in an elective government!" For these forty congregations there are fourteen ministers, and every one of them maintained, wholly or in part, by the "Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts."

But, whether paid or unpaid, the candidate resolved to obtain the "succession," and went to Edinburgh after it. On the 17th of November, 1784, in a dwelling house in Long Acre, a narrow lane of the city, Dr. Seabury received whatever of Episcopal ordination the three Scotch bishops could give him. To those who regard this transaction from a scriptural standpoint, there is no difficulty whatever. Whether the three ministers who participated in the act of ordination were real bishops or only presbyters in the Church, it is not at all material. The broad seal of the kingdom of Jesus Christ covers all commissions

* Life of Seabury, p. 115.

to preach the gospel, and no hand of man is essential to the full and absolute qualification of the messengers of the glad tidings of salvation.

It is only from the stand-point of the High-churchman that the affair is worthy of examination or of debate. According to the creed of those who contend for the "uninterrupted transmission of ministerial authority from the apostles," these Scotchmen had undoubtedly forfeited, if they ever possessed, "the succession." The same legislative power that had created the Episcopal Church in Scotland had destroyed it. A heavy penalty was laid upon any who pretended to revive it, or who professed to meet in its name and for its ecclesiastical purposes. Whether justly or unjustly, it is not necessary to decide, but the action of the British Legislature had *destroyed* the Episcopal Church of Scotland. A dozen clergymen, or ten thousand clergymen, had no more right to assemble themselves together and declare themselves to be the Church of Scotland than the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States has to declare itself the American Church. If a dozen gentlemen in Scotland, holding appointment from a dethroned King of Great Britain, have the right to declare themselves the Episcopal Church of Scotland, a dozen Roman Catholic clergymen have the right to declare themselves the true Church of England. Popery was never more absolutely deprived of its Church character and ecclesiastical authority in England than episcopacy was in Scotland. The same arguments that reinstate the one restore the other. Bishops without dioceses, and dioceses without parishes, and churches without pastors—a skeleton machinery that perpetuates itself in

defiance of law and in the face of the most restrictive edicts—cannot constitute a Church of Christ. It cannot deserve this title when the single motive for the distinctive existence of the Society is a purely political question, with which a scriptural Church never had and never can have any thing to do without abandoning its character as a Church and assuming the attitude of a political party. Whether James II. or William III. was the rightful King of Great Britain was a question that had no more to do with the proper functions of a Church than the ordination of a bishop has with the mathematical problem of squaring the circle. If the Episcopal party in Scotland chose to suspend their existence as a Church upon the issue, the decision was against them, and they passed out of being as effectually as if every member of their organization had perished in a night.

But whatever may have been the value of the benefit received at the hands of the three Episcopal brethren in Scotland, it was not suffered to be bestowed without at least one protest from America. Dr. White does not appear to have turned aside from the even tenor of his way. He was engaged in consulting with his brethren, giving and taking advice, and putting things in order for future collective action. A certain Dr. Smith, of Maryland, “had views of his own to promote,” Dr. Beardsley tells us; and he wrote a warning letter to the adventurous Scotchmen, “appealing to them, if they valued their own peace and advantage as a Christian society, not to meddle with the consecration. He affirmed that it was against the earnest and sound advice of the archbishops of Canterbury and York, to whom Dr. Sea-

bury's design was communicated, they not thinking him a fit person, especially as he was actively and deeply engaged against Congress; that he would by this forward step render episcopacy suspected there, the people not having had time, after a total derangement of their civil affairs, to consider as yet of ecclesiastical; and if it were unexpectedly and rashly introduced among them at the instigation of a few clergy only that remain, without their being consulted, would occasion it to be entirely slighted, unless with the approbation of the State they belong to; which is what they are laboring after just now, having called several provincial meetings together this autumn to settle some preliminary articles of a Protestant Episcopal Church, as near as may be to that of England or Scotland."*

An impartial reader will see in this letter not the envious spirit which courted the honor about to be bestowed upon another, but the wise, prudent, and patriotic spirit of a man equally the friend of his country and of his Church. Although a Scotchman by birth, he was a true man, and adhered to the cause of the colonies, and it had been far better for the Protestant Episcopal Church if his counsels had been heeded by the ardent Scotchmen. No matter what the character of Dr. Seabury was; no matter that he may have been distinguished for piety, and that his private character was beyond reproach. He was a Tory, and proposed to become the pastor of a flock in a country whose independence he had antagonized. He was an open, undisguised, uncompromising enemy to republicanism, and proposed to create a diocese

* Life of Seabury, p. 120.

in a republic, with republicans for his parishioners. He was about to proceed to a territory where the ashes of consuming fires were not yet cold—fires of hatred and vindictiveness which his own party had kindled, and his own conduct had perpetuated.

The imprudence was only equaled by the impudence of the undertaking. To enter upon a secret expedition, with the intention of *compelling* a people to accept or reject him, by appealing to their love of the Church and their desire to avoid the scandal of an act of direct repudiation, reveals characteristics which, happily, are seldom found in the modern history of Christianity. To do this, too, at the same time that he held the claim and received the salary of a chaplain of the British army on half-pay, was an act of presumption which nothing but a boundless charity can reconcile with the principles of honor. He not only entered the service of his country's enemies, but five years after he became a bishop of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States, he was drawing his half-pay as a chaplain in the army of George III. Nothing but the prudence of Dr. White prevented this fact from disturbing the convention of 1789.*

The connection of Dr. Chandler with the early petitions and appeals relating to the American episcopate will justify the notice of an inaccuracy in the "Life of Bishop Hobart," and a similar blunder in "Whitehead's Life of Wesley." In the "Life of Hobart" we are told that the Bishop of London, paying a compliment to Dr. Chandler for his "Appeals" to the government in Church and State, remarked that he

* White's Memoirs, p. 168.

hoped "such an essential service would not be forgotten." "The concluding word of the above quotation deserves notice," says the biographer, "as it shows that the Bishop underrated the motives of the writer. In after years, when the policy for which Dr. Chandler now vainly pleaded was freely adopted by the British Government toward their remaining American colonies, the newly created bishopric of Nova Scotia was, without solicitation, offered to him, while he had the satisfaction of showing, by his equally decided refusal, that he had petitioned in former times for the Church, not for himself." *

In the letter of the New York clergymen to the Archbishop of York, Dr. Chandler was recommended for the bishopric of Nova Scotia, and the influence of Sir Guy Carleton was solicited in his behalf.† Dr. Chandler was in England during the war, and according to the testimony of Dr. Seabury, he applied in person for the bishopric of Nova Scotia. Under date of May 3, 1784, Dr. Seabury says: "Dr. Chandler has been with him (the Archbishop of Canterbury) to-day, on the subject of the Nova Scotia episcopate, which, I believe, will be effected."‡ Dr. White, in the "Additional Statements" of his Memoirs, says: "This learned and respectable gentleman (Dr. Chandler), after having been in England during the war, had returned to his family and former residence, laboring under a cancerous or scorbutic complaint, which had consumed a considerable proportion of his face. He had been designed for the contemplated bishopric of Nova Scotia, as the author was afterward informed

* Life of Hobart, p. 18. † White's Memoirs, p. 335. ‡ Life of Seabury, p. 101.

by the Archbishop of Canterbury. His complaint became too bad to admit of his undertaking the charge."*

Finally, Dr. Whitehead, in his "Life of Wesley," quoting a letter to Dr. Chandler, calls him "one of the American bishops ordained in England."† Thus we have a series of errors, only worthy of notice because the characters are historical. Dr. Chandler did seek the bishopric of Nova Scotia, and would have been appointed if his health had not interfered. He had served the cause approved by his conscience, and his melancholy end was a subject of regret to those who had opposed as well as those who had favored his opinions.

* White's Memoirs, p. 137. † Life of Wesley, p. 528.

Chapter VIII.

John Adams and Benjamin Franklin in Chase of an Apostolical Succession—Accidental Allusion results in Diplomacy—Act of Parliament for supplying Clergymen with Orders—Court of Denmark ready to Ordain Preachers for America—Dr. White opposed to Foreign Interference—Benjamin Franklin's Letter—The "Cross Old Gentleman at Canterbury"—Good Common Sense—A hundred years hence—Humor—Denmark did not offer Episcopacy to America—A good reason why—No Apostolical Succession in Denmark—Lost—Testimony of Dr. Hook and others—Superintendents are Bishops in Denmark.

IMMEDIATELY after the proclamation of peace between the United States and Great Britain, a few young men crossed the Atlantic and sought ordination at the hands of the Bishop of London. That prelate had no legal authority in any of the thirteen colonies, and of course had none in the new relations that the people of America had assumed. As a matter of course, Bishop Lowth declined to ordain the candidates. He had refused a similar favor at the solicitation of John Wesley, and had a sufficient reason for doing so. He could not ordain a minister without requiring canonical obedience to his diocesan. There was no diocese and no diocesan, and consequently no jurisdiction. There was no logical argument to be made in defense of Episcopal ordination for America, as the laws of England stood at that time.

At this juncture, however, Mr. Adams, the American Minister to Great Britain, proposed the question to the Danish Ambassador to Holland. The court of Denmark, anxious to show a kindly disposition to the young republic, referred the matter to the theological

faculty of the kingdom. The outcome of the whole affair was an offer to ordain candidates from America, on the condition of their signing the Thirty-nine Articles of the Church of England, with the exception of the political parts of them; the service to be performed in Latin, in accommodation to the candidates, who might be supposed unacquainted with the language of the country. This affair, from various causes, has assumed a degree of importance that renders it worthy of a somewhat extended notice.

Mr. Adams, who was a Unitarian, and Benjamin Franklin, who was by no means an Episcopalian, seem to be engaged in the rather singular employment of procuring the "apostolical succession" for the United States. In order to understand the merits of the case, the entire correspondence is inserted.

No. I.

[*Copy of a letter from John Adams, Esq., to the President of Congress, dated the Hague, April 22, 1784.*]

SIR: I received some time since a letter from an American gentleman now in London, a candidate for orders, desiring to know if American candidates might have orders from Protestant bishops on the Continent, and complaining that he had been refused by the Bishop of London, unless he would take the oaths of allegiance, etc.

Meeting soon afterward the Danish minister, I had the curiosity to inquire of him whether ordination might be had in Denmark. He answered me that he knew not, but would soon inform himself. I heard no more of it until to-day, when the Secretary of his embassy, Mr. De Rosencrantz, made me a visit, and delivered me the papers, copies of which are inclosed. Thus it seems that what I meant as current conversation only has been made the subject of the deliberation of the Government of Denmark, and their faculty of theology; which makes it necessary for me to transmit it to Congress. I am happy to find the decision so liberal.

I have the honor to be, etc.,

(Signed.)

J. ADAMS.

No. II.

[*Translation of a communication of Mr. de St. Saphorin, to Mr. John Adams, dated the Hague, April 21, 1784.*]

Mr. de St. Saphorin has the honor to communicate to Mr. Adams the answer he has received from his Excellency the Count de Rosencrone, Privy Counselor and Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs of his Danish Majesty, relative to what Mr. Adams desired to know. He shall be happy if this account shall be agreeable to him, as well as to his superiors, and useful to his fellow-citizens. He has the honor to assure him of his respect.

(Signed, etc.)

No. III.

[*Translation of the copy of an extract of a letter from his Excellency the Count de Rosencrone, Privy Counselor of his Majesty, the King of Denmark, to Mr. de St. Saphorin, Envoy Extraordinary from his Majesty to the States General.*]

The opinion of the theological faculty having been taken on the question made to your Excellency by Mr. Adams, if the American ministers of the Church of England can be consecrated here by a bishop of the Danish Church, I am ordered by the King to authorize you to answer that such an act can take place according to the Danish rites; but for the convenience of the Americans, who are supposed not to know the Danish language, the Latin language will be made use of on the occasion; for the rest, nothing will be exacted from the candidates but a profession conformable to the Articles of the English Church, omitting the oath called test, which prevents their being ordained by the English bishops.

No. IV.

SECRETARY'S OFFICE, 6th April, 1785.

SIR: Copies of the inclosed letters from Mr. John Adams and Mr. de St. Saphorin, upon the subject of conferring holy orders agreeably to the principles of the Church of England, were this day received by Council; who have been pleased to direct that they should be communicated to you. I must beg that they be returned to this office, as soon as you may find it convenient, and am,

Sir, with greatest respect, your most obedient, humble servant,

(Signed.)

J. ARMSTRONG, JR.

REV. DR. WM. WHITE.

No. V.

[Answer to the letter of Mr. Armstrong:]

SIR: I request you to present to the honorable Council my grateful sentiments of their polite attention to the interests of the Episcopal Church, in your communication of this morning. Their condescension will be my apology for my troubling them with the perusal of an act of the British Parliament, having the same operation with the liberal and brotherly proceeding of the Danish Government and clergy. And the liberty I have taken may hereafter exempt some of my brethren from the suspicion of having entered into obligations inconsistent with their duty to their country. But, sir, it would be injustice to the Episcopal Church were I to neglect to inform the honorable Board that I take it to be a general sentiment not to depend on any foreign authority for the ordination of ministers, or for any other matter appertaining to religion. As the light in which we shall hereafter be viewed by our fellow-citizens must depend on an adherence to the above-mentioned principle, I take the liberty to submit to the honorable Council two printed accounts of proceedings held in this city and in New York.

With most dutiful thanks to the honorable Board, and with all due submission, I am, sir,

Their and your very humble servant,

WM. WHITE.

April 6th, 1785.

J. ARMSTRONG, ESQ.

There are several features of interest in the foregoing letters. The Danish minister evidently supposed that the want of the "apostolical succession" was one that was sorely exercising the young American republic, inasmuch as the ambassador of that people had undertaken to negotiate for a supply of the mysterious virtue supposed to exist in the hands of Episcopal dignitaries in Europe. As the Danes had an institution called episcopacy, they were perfectly willing to allow American gentlemen to receive authority to preach the gospel by way of Denmark. Mr. Adams had committed a diplomatic blunder, but he es-

caped from the meshes as gracefully as possible. He meant what he said to be only as "current conversation," but was surprised to find that the matter of laying a pair of hands on the head of a young gentleman from America had become an international question, and therefore proceeded to place the matter in the hands of the President of the Continental Congress. Mr. Adams does not conceal the feeling of amusement which the incident has awakened in his mind; for personally he regards the "apostolical succession" to be about as necessary or as helpful to a minister as the toga of Cicero would be to an orator of the present age.

But the court of Denmark gravely considers the case, and consents to have "the American ministers of the Church of England" consecrated "according to Danish rites," provided they—the American ministers—make "a profession conformable to the Articles of the English Church, omitting the oath called test," the said "oath called test" preventing "their being ordained by the English bishops!" Never was there such a conglomeration of persons, principles, and Churches, since the dawn of civilization! "American ministers of the Church of England," to be ordained according to "the principles of the Church of England," in the kingdom of Denmark, by the "rites of the Danish Church," after conforming to the doctrines of the Church of England!

This delectable specimen of diplomacy is conveyed to Dr. White by the Secretary of the Council, the correspondence having been that day received, after the expiration of nearly twelve months from the reception of the letter by Mr. Adams. Of such profound im-

portance is the record of the transaction that the Secretary begs the excellent Dr. White to return to the office the "copies" of the letters. That the originals might be required for the purpose of placing them on file is apparent, but why the Secretary should wish to have the *copies* returned is beyond the comprehension of ordinary men.

Dr. White, however, improves the occasion. In a style which distinguishes him above his fellows—a style that would have qualified him for diplomatic service almost anywhere—he returns thanks to the Council for "their polite attention to the interests of the Episcopal Church." But he requires them to read, as a reward or a punishment for their condescension, "an Act of the British Parliament, having the same operation with the liberal and brotherly proceeding of the Danish Government and clergy." This Act he mentions in another place, where his words seem to conflict with the position assumed in this letter to the Secretary. "Another resource remained," says the Bishop, speaking of the Philadelphia Convention of September, 1785, "in foreign ordination, which had been made the easier by the Act of the British Parliament, passed in the preceding year, to enable the Bishop of London to ordain citizens or subjects of foreign countries without exacting the usual oaths. But besides that, this would have kept the Church under the same hardships which had heretofore existed, and had been so long complained of—dependence on a foreign country in spirituals, when there had taken place independence in temporals, is what no prudent person would have pleaded for."*

* *Memoirs of the Church*, p. 114.

If we can succeed in disentangling this web-work of words, we may arrive at an intelligible idea of the Doctor's meaning. He says, in April, 1785, that the British Parliament has passed a liberal and brotherly act, one having the same operation as the proceeding of the Government and clergy of Denmark; but the general sentiment of Episcopalians in the United States is opposed to dependence upon "any foreign authority for the ordination of ministers, or for any other matter appertaining to religion." If they should consent to send their young men, as aforetime, across the water to be ordained—even if no unrepugnant oaths were exacted of them—the American people would naturally, and justly, regard the Episcopal Church with contempt and scorn. Thus far, all is clear enough. Dr. White wanted a Church, a genuine, independent, self-governing Church. He had quite a number of members, but they had no *head*. They cannot manufacture a head, and until they get one they are an acephalous body. "The Middle and Southern States were for delay," says Dr. McVickar, in the *Life of Bishop Hobart*. "'Let us first gather together,' said they, 'our scattered members.' The language of the East and North was wiser: 'Let us first have a head to see, and then we shall be better enabled to find our members.'"*

Now Dr. White says that his people are resolved not to depend upon any foreign country for the ordination of ministers, nor "for any other matter appertaining to religion." How, then, can they obtain the head that is to see, and then to gather the members? Is it not the most absolute dependence that is con-

* *Life of Hobart*, p. 84.

ceivable to have the creation of a head determined by the will of a foreign nation? Surely the head "appertains to religion." To receive that head at the option of a foreign authority is to be dependent upon that authority, and yet Dr. White says that his people have resolved not to do this! It is a maze of contradictions, in which the diplomatic speech of the excellent man enables him "to explain without explaining." The liberty he takes, in notifying the Supreme Council of the State of Pennsylvania that a liberal and brotherly act has been passed by the British Parliament, "may hereafter exempt some of" his "brethren from the suspicion of having entered into obligations inconsistent with their duty to their country." What does he mean by these words? If American candidates are hereafter ordained by the Bishop of London, the Act of Parliament would exempt them from this charge; but in what way does Dr. White's communication to the Supreme Council of Pennsylvania accomplish that result? Unless the Council are the parties likely to entertain the suspicions, and these gentlemen have no other means of learning the nature of the Act of Parliament, except that afforded by Dr. White, we must resign the sentence to that obscurity of purpose which only the esteemed author could remove.

While Mr. Adams, the Unitarian Independent has been in chase of the "succession" in London, and at the Hague, we find the sober, discreet, but humor-loving Benjamin Franklin similarly employed in Paris. The persevering young gentlemen from Maryland and South Carolina were determined to bring the envoys extraordinary and ministers plenipotentiary of

the American republic into the controversy, and they presented their petitions to these republican ambassadors with a zeal which deserves commemoration. The letter of Dr. Franklin is characteristic in the highest degree, and will not detract from his well-won reputation for good sense and sound judgment. It is a strong presentation of the case from a stand-point which no thoughtful theologian can afford to despise:

[*To Messrs. Weems and Grant, citizens of the United States, in London.*]

PARIS, 18 July, 1784.

GENTLEMEN: On receipt of your letter acquainting me that the Archbishop of Canterbury would not permit you to be ordained unless you took the oath of allegiance, I applied to a clergyman of my acquaintance for information on the subject of your obtaining ordination here. His opinion was that it could not be done, and that if it were done, you would be required to vow obedience to the Archbishop of Paris. I next inquired of the Pope's Nuncio, whether you might not be ordained by the Bishop of America, powers being sent him for the purpose, if he has them not already. The answer was, The thing is impossible, unless the gentlemen become Catholics. This is an affair of which I know but very little, and therefore I may ask questions and propose means that are improper or impracticable. But, what is the necessity of your being connected with the Church of England? Would it not do as well if you were of the Church of Ireland? The religion is the same, though there is a different set of bishops and archbishops. Perhaps if you were to apply to the Bishop of Derry, who is a man of liberal sentiments, he might give you orders, as of that Church. If both Britain and Ireland refuse you (and I am not sure that the Bishop of Denmark or Sweden would ordain you unless you became Lutherans), what is then to be done? Next to becoming Presbyterians, the Episcopal clergy of America, in my humble opinion, cannot do better than to follow the example of the first clergy in Scotland soon after the conversion of that country to Christianity, when their King had built the Cathedral of St. Andrews, and requested the King of Northumberland to lend his bishops to ordain one of them, that their clergy might not, as heretofore, be obliged to go to Northumberland for or-

ders; and their request was refused. They assembled in the cathedral, and the miter, crosier, and robes of a bishop being laid upon the altar, they, after earnest prayers for direction in their choice, elected one of their own number, when the King said to him: "Arise, go to the altar, and receive your office at the hand of God." His brethren led him to the altar, robed him, put the crosier in his hand, and he became the first Bishop of Scotland.

If the British islands were sunk in the sea (and the surface of the globe has suffered greater changes), you would probably take some such method as this; and if they persist in denying your ordination, it is the same thing. A hundred years hence, when people are more enlightened, it will be wondered at that men in America, qualified by their learning and piety to pray for and instruct their neighbors, should not be permitted to do it till they had made a voyage of six thousand miles out and home, to ask leave of a cross-old gentleman at Canterbury, who seems by your account to have as little regard for the souls of the people of Maryland as King William's Attorney-general Seymour had for those of Virginia. The Reverend Commissary Blair, who projected the college of that province, and was in England to solicit benefactions and a charter, relates that the Queen, in the King's absence, having ordered Seymour to draw up the charter, which was to be given with two thousand pounds in money, he opposed the grant, saying that the nation was engaged in an expensive war, that the money was wanted for better purposes, and he did not see the least occasion for a college in Virginia. Blair represented to him that its intention was to educate and qualify young men to be ministers of the gospel, much wanted there; and begged Mr. Attorney would consider that the people of Virginia had souls to be saved as well as those of England. "Souls?" said he; "— your souls! make tobacco."

I have the honor to be, gentlemen, etc.

B. FRANKLIN.

The union of genuine humor with strong common sense places this letter among the best productions of the practical philosopher. Franklin humored the wishes of his young countrymen as far as he thought it proper to do so, and doubtless subjected himself to no little criticism in his attempts to please them; but

failing in his efforts, he politely tells them that they are, after all, in pursuit of something that is not worth the trouble. That any man in Europe should have it in his power to grant or refuse permission to preach the gospel in America was, to his strong common sense, a most ludicrous, if not incredible thing; not a whit less objectionable than the superstitions from which the Protestant world had turned away at the Reformation. Living, as we do, at the end of the hundred years which he mentions, it is rather in the spirit of humiliation that we look back upon these clerical adventurers who were knocking at all sorts of doors to find somebody who was entitled to the honor of giving them "marching orders."

The affair of Mr. Adams, however, has given currency to an error which not even the authority of Dr. White has been able to correct. "At this moment another source for obtaining episcopal consecration was opened through the medium of the Church of Denmark, and the correspondence entered into on the occasion went so far as to obtain from the Danish authorities the manner in which and the terms on which it would have been granted."* Such are the terms employed by Dr. McVickar to describe the proposal of the Danish authorities. But the fact is that no offer of *episcopal* consecration was ever made. The Danes offered to ordain some young men to the ministry, they did not propose to create an episcopacy for the United States. The remark of Bishop Hobart's biographer, that "such an episcopate must have been unquestioned," will be examined in the light of information which neither Dr. White nor Dr. McVickar possessed. An-

* Life of Hobart, p. 90.

other eulogist of Bishop Hobart will give some curious testimony upon this point—the canonical character of the Episcopal Church of Denmark.

The Rev. Dr. Colton, in his work entitled “Genius and Mission of the Church,” says: “Although episcopacy had been tendered to America by the Danish Church, through the American Minister at London—Mr. John Adams—filial preferences naturally inclined the American Church to obtain it from the west side of the channel.”* Thus it is repeated, in many forms of expression, that the Church of Denmark offered to give the apostolical succession to the United States. What must be his thankfulness for his escape, when the modern High-churchman learns that the Church of Denmark had no “apostolical succession” to give away, for she had none for herself!

Dr. Hook, in his Preface to the Life of Bishop Hobart, says: “It has of late years been ascertained that while the Episcopal succession has certainly been preserved in the Church of Sweden, *it has been lost in the Church of Denmark*, whose episcopacy is only nominal.”† It is not easy to determine what Dr. Hook means by a “nominal episcopacy.” If he means that there were certain ecclesiastical officers in Denmark who are *called* bishops, without making the slightest pretensions to, or possessing the slightest respect for, the “apostolical succession,” he is undoubtedly correct. The sources of information are abundant, testifying to the fact that the episcopacy of Denmark, if derived at all, was obtained from the Lutheran Church of Germany, and therefore the “orders” of the Danish Church are no

* Genius of the Church, p. 147. † Preface to Early Life and Professional Years of Bishop Hobart.

better, no worse, than those of the Lutheran Church of Prussia. As this question had assumed such overwhelming importance in the mind of the High-churchmen, it is not a little remarkable that Dr. White and his co-laborers did not make themselves acquainted with the history of the Church whose "liberal and brotherly proposition" might have brought disaster to the helpless Americans. It was a clear case of another Trojan horse presenting himself at the gates of Troy. In this case, however, a back gate seems to have been opened, and the citadel of antiquity was stormed by combining Canterbury, the King, and the Lords and Commons of Parliament, in a grand effort to create a Church of Christ in the United States. If Dr. White and Dr. Seabury had been inclosed in the Trojan horse of Denmark, who could foretell the results?

"An Account of Denmark as it was in 1692" was written by an envoy of William III. to the Danish kingdom. In that work the author says: "There are six superintendents in Denmark, who take it very kindly to be called *bishops*, and my lord, viz.: one in Zealand, one in Funen, and four in Jutland; there are also four in Norway. These have no temporalities, keep no ecclesiastical courts, have no cathedrals, with prebends, canons, deans, sub-deans, etc., but are only *primi inter pares*; having the rank above the clergy of their province, and the inspection into their doctrine and manners."*

This is the species of episcopacy owned by all the reformed Churches of Europe as scriptural, and by most of them accepted and practiced. So far as the

*Account of Denmark, p. 161.

organization of the Danish episcopate is concerned, it is in full accord with that of the early Church, as we shall endeavor to show hereafter. That it is in absolute subordination to the State is evident. The "royal law of Denmark" says: "The King shall have an absolute authority in the affairs of the Church and all religious assemblies. In a word, he shall enjoy all the rights and prerogatives which an hereditary, absolute, or despotic king can enjoy." * Thus it appears that the Church of Denmark had little or nothing to do with the matter of proposing to ordain the young American candidates. The King thought that the American people were cut off from the fountains of grace, and were in distress, and he kindly tendered the good offices of his Church. The clergy were consulted—if at all—only as a matter of courtesy, for the word of the King was supreme. "A copy of the Count de Rosenchrone's letter was sent, by order of Congress, to the executive authority in each of the States, and at this convention (1785) it was laid before the House in a communication sent to it from the Governor of Virginia." † "The proceeding in Denmark," says Dr. White, "was made known to the American Government by Mr. Adams, a copy of whose letter to the President of Congress was sent to the author by the then Supreme Council of Pennsylvania." ‡ Thus it appears that the ordination of a young man to the ministry in London becomes a question that sets ambassadors to work. Correspondence with foreign countries interests the King of the generous Danes, occasions a letter of an ambassador to Congress; and this letter,

* Account of Denmark, p. 188. † Protestant Episcopal Church in Virginia, p. 182. ‡ Memoirs, p. 18.

by Congressional authority, is sent to the Governors of thirteen States with all the solemnity of a profound question involving the well-being of the nation! Truly may we adopt the language of Dr. McVickar, describing the infantile feebleness of Episcopalianism at this crisis: "Other denominations had from the first been taught to depend upon themselves. The Episcopal Church was like a child that had never walked, and when cut loose from its leading-strings its first steps were necessarily in feebleness and fear."* Notwithstanding such helpers as kings, theological faculties, ambassadors, Presidents of Congress, Governors of States, and supreme councils, it staggered and fell helpless to the floor, from which it was raised at last by an Act of Parliament and sundry acts of compliance with the demands of "the cross old gentleman at Canterbury," which remain to be examined in a future chapter.

* Life of Hobart, p. 92.

Chapter IX.

Republican Sentiment in the Colonies—Episcopal Influence on the wane—First Methodist Sermon in Virginia—Devereaux Jarratt—An early Methodist—No Ordinances—Children Unbaptized, People without the Lord's Supper—Popular Appeals to Asbury and the Preachers—Bishop Hobart's Biographer—Description of the Religious Condition of the Colonies—History of the Protestant Episcopal Church in Virginia, by Dr. Hawks—Biographers of Wesley, Whitehead, and Hampson—Prejudiced Writers—Unreliable Parties Quoted by the Enemies of Methodism—Coke and Moore's Life of Wesley—Dr. Hawks the chief authority for Episcopal Writers—Some Statements Examined—Unconscious Humor—Asbury and the Ordinance Question—The Compromise—Appeal to Mr. Wesley.

THE failure to obtain a resident bishop in America was undoubtedly due to the growth of republican sentiments in the colonies. The tyranny of the Government, which taxed the people and yet denied them representation in the Legislature of the kingdom, was growing more and more manifest. It was not the amount of the taxation, it was the principle, that raised the spirit of rebellion among the colonists. The British Parliament was the mere creature of the Monarch. It was not a matter of reproach to the party in power, but it was rather a subject of boasting that the King could purchase a majority of the members whenever it suited him to do so. Bribery was openly practiced. The King having determined to suppress the spirit of resistance in the colonies, bent all the energies of the empire to that end.

Far-seeing men knew that the opening of the war between the mother country and the colonies was the death-knell to British dominion in America; but the good-humored Prime-minister respected nothing but the grim determination of his master, and the war was pushed to extremities. The American people could never have been conquered. They were free from their birth. Their allegiance to a throne three thousand miles away was a matter of sentiment and not of interest or principle. When the King exhibited a spirit of fierce, unrelenting hostility, the colonists became, in prosperity and adversity alike, the indomitable foes of monarchy. Every thing that bore the badge or wore the insignia of kingly authority became hateful to the people. The division of families into Whig and Tory parties tended more and more to embitter and prolong the strife. Men who suffered and toiled and waited, as did the men of Valley Forge in the memorable winter of 1780, were never born to wear the badge of slavery.

As the republican spirit began to manifest itself, the Episcopal clergymen of Virginia became more and more unpopular. Blinded by the self-delusion which so often precedes the overthrow of human institutions, the clergy felt themselves secure from the enmity of the people because they were installed in parishes whose glebes formed a life-estate for their possessors. But as the spirit of antagonism to the mother country became more marked, these clergymen declared themselves on the side of Great Britain. A few honorable exceptions—perhaps seven or eight, according to the estimate of Dr. Hawks*—could not redeem a

* Protestant Episcopal Church in Virginia, p. 136.

hundred clergymen from the political hatred which they had invited by their own follies.

The first sermon preached by a Methodist in Virginia was in 1772.* Among the clergymen of the colony there were only two that gave any encouragement to Robert Williams and his co-laborers in Methodism. These were Devereaux Jarrett and Archibald McRoberts. The latter left the Episcopal Church during the war and became a Presbyterian;† the former was a truly pious man, whose zeal for the cause of Christ brought upon him the energetic opposition of his brethren. "He was looked upon with an evil eye by the Established clergy," says Dr. Bennett. "He had but little intercourse with them, though he occasionally attended their conventions. At one held in Williamsburg in 1774, he was treated so unkindly and heard the doctrine of Christianity so ridiculed, that he determined to attend no more. He kept this resolution until 1785, when he was present at one in Richmond; but he was so coldly received that he remained only a few hours, and then rode home."‡

At the commencement of the war in 1776, nine Methodist preachers were traveling in Virginia. There were then between ninety and one hundred Episcopal clergymen, and among these two men who gave their countenance to the labors of the itinerant preachers. Within a period of less than five years "the people called Methodists" had grown to a membership of more than four thousand in the colony. For this large number of converted men and women there was not a minister of the gospel authorized to administer

* Bennett's *Memorials of Methodism in Virginia*, p. 51. † *Ibid.*, p. 59. ‡ *Ibid.*, pp. 62, 63.

the sacraments! Hundreds of persons, who had never been baptized by any formula or mode, sought admission to the Methodist societies, and the preachers who had been the means of their conversion were unable to baptize them! Baptist and Presbyterian ministers, in no respect the superiors of the Methodist pastors, were organizing churches, baptizing their converts, and administering the Lord's Supper without let or hinderance, since the partial triumph of Mr. Jefferson and his party in the Legislature of 1776. The Episcopal clergy had for the most part abandoned their homes and fled from the republican sentiment which ruled the colony. Among those who remained, Mr. Jarratt was the only clergyman who offered to administer the ordinances for the Methodists. The liturgy of the Episcopalians required the prayer for King George; and as those of the clergy who professed even the form of godliness were royalists, and would not omit the prayer, there was no possibility of even an occasional church-service.

The author of the biography of Bishop Hobart has given a graphic picture of the state of affairs, and the causes conducing to it, at the time of the organization of the Methodist Episcopal Church in America. Speaking of the Episcopal Church, he says: "At the North, in a few of the larger cities—Philadelphia, New York, Newport, and Boston—congregations had by this time" (the commencement of the Revolutionary War), "arisen with means sufficient to support their own clergy; but beyond these towns all were missionaries, paid and supported either wholly or in part from abroad. The evils of such a condition were obvious. At the South legal Establishment, and at

the North foreign funds, made the clergy independent of the laity, and the laity unconcerned about the Church. From the want of an episcopate there was no spiritual jurisdiction either to confer orders, administer confirmation, or enforce discipline. The Church had, consequently, neither point of union nor power of increase; its ministers were chiefly foreigners, and therefore alien to the feelings of the people; while of such as went for orders it was estimated that one-fifth perished amid the perils of the journey.

“To a Church thus constituted (if Church it might be termed), the consequences of the Revolution were for a time fatal. Identified by popular prejudice with the royal government, it fell in public opinion with it. In Virginia and Maryland, where the Church had been strongest—numbering in the former alone above one hundred clergymen—the popular fury was immediately directed against it as the stronghold of the royal party. The clergy were driven from their cures, the churches shut up or sold, and in defiance of law, the glebe lands eventually declared forfeited. In the North an equal fate awaited—the support of the missionaries being withdrawn, they too were soon forced to follow; the churches closed and the congregations scattered. So utter, in short, was this dispersion that for some years (to give an individual illustration) the present Bishop of Pennsylvania was the sole remnant of the clergy in the whole of that province. The war of the Revolution may therefore in truth be said to have *desolated* the Church, for out of that struggle it came forth with deserted temples, broken altars, and alienated property; deprived of its ablest clergy by death or exile, destitute of the means of

ordaining others, and laboring under the popular odium of attachment to monarchical principles and a foreign government, and that government the very one from whose thralldom the country had just freed itself. Never, certainly, was any portion of the Christian Church in a state of greater depression, and what with internal weakness and external hostility, there seemed to be but little chance of its ever rising out of it.”*

“To add to these accumulated sorrows, the few churches that remained had no tie of brotherhood among themselves; the external bond being removed, they fell apart like a rope of sand; there was neither union nor government nor strength; each stood in its own state of helpless independency, fast tending—to use the expressive language of Burke—toward ‘the dust and powder of individuality.’ In this state of destitution, to crown all other evils, the anarchy of heresy began to creep in among them. One of the most influential churches in Boston, and the oldest in the Northern States—tracing back to the time of Charles II.—openly professed Unitarianism, and new-modeled its liturgy accordingly. Churchmen in South Carolina were for adopting a nominal episcopacy, the Legislature of Maryland entertained the plan of themselves appointing ordainers, and Socinian principles were avowed by some among the members of the Church, and suspected among many.”†

That the colony of Maryland had established the Episcopal form of worship in 1692 is evident, but it does not appear that the majority of the colonists preferred at any time the Church of their rulers. When

* Memoir of Bishop Hobart, p. 78. † Ibid., p. 80.

a clergyman wrote to the Archbishop of Canterbury about the year 1675, complaining that there was no Established ministry in the colony, the Privy Council inquired the reason why. To this inquiry Lord Baltimore replied "that all forms of Christian faith were tolerated, and every denomination supported its own ministers; that the Non-conformists outnumbered Churchmen and Romanists together by about three to one; and to compel them to support ministers not of their own faith would be a burden at once unjust and hard to impose."*

If the Romanists and Churchmen amounted to only one-third of the population in 1675, it is not probable that the Churchmen formed a greater proportion than one-fifth or, at most, one-fourth of the colonists in 1692. Nevertheless, the Assembly "divided the ten counties into parishes, and imposed a tax of forty pounds of tobacco per poll on all taxables for the purpose of building the churches and maintaining the clergy." In 1702 a toleration clause was added exempting dissenters and Quakers from penalties and disabilities, and permitting the use of separate meeting-houses, "provided that they paid their forty pounds per poll to support the Established Church." "We may now place side by side," says Mr. Browne, "the three tolerations of Maryland. The toleration of the Proprietaries lasted fifty years, and under it all believers in Christ were equal before the law, and all support to churches or ministers was voluntary; the Puritan toleration lasted six years, and included all but papists, prelatists, and those who held objectionable doctrines; the Anglican toleration lasted

* Browne's History of Maryland, p. 129.

eighty years, and had glebes and churches for the Establishment, connivance for dissenters, the penal laws for Catholics, and for all the forty per poll.”*

There was nothing in the history of the Episcopalians of Maryland to render their Church system more popular than it had proved to be in Virginia. The admission of persons of all creeds and conditions rendered the colony a more desirable refuge for those who longed for religious freedom; but the taxation imposed upon all for the benefit of one denomination could not fail to produce a state of irritation which only needed the deliverance from monarchical government to show itself. Aristocratic institutions could never stand before the ballot-box in America.

In the “History of the Protestant Episcopal Church in Virginia,” there is an attempt at a truthful statement of the relations existing between the early Methodists and the Episcopalians at the time of the organization of the Methodist Episcopal Church in 1784. It is not necessary to question the integrity of the historian, but it is impossible to read his narrative without discerning the spirit of a man so partial to his own cause and Church that he cannot be relied upon when the truth of history demands an impeachment of the sect to which he belongs. Impartiality is not expected, perhaps it cannot be observed. But

* Browne’s History of Maryland, p. 185. This excellent writer is betrayed into a singular anachronism. He says, p. 185: “Their second act was to make the *Protestant Episcopal Church* the Established Church of the province.” The Protestant Episcopal Church appears first in history in 1784, when the Episcopalians of Virginia were incorporated by the Legislature, under that name. Two years afterward the act of incorporation was repealed, and the following year the name was given to the Episcopal Church in the United States

the lapse of fifty years had furnished a variety of authorities which Dr. Hawks might have consulted if he had desired to do so. Richard Watson had exposed the unfairness of Robert Southey in his "Life of Wesley," and his replies to the assaults of the enemies of Methodism were sufficiently satisfactory to those who wished to know the truth. Yet we find Dr. Hawks, some years after the publication of the work of Watson, quoting the errors and misstatements of Whitehead and Hampson.

The amount of credit to be attached to the work of Mr. Hampson will appear from a plain statement of the facts. John Hampson, sr., and John Hampson, jr., were among those who were greatly offended at the action of Mr. Wesley in omitting their names from the catalogue of the Legal Hundred. If one hundred names had to be selected from twice that number, it is evident that some persons must be offended, because of their inordinate self-esteem. The Messrs. Hampson were not chosen by Mr. Wesley, and they deserted him and the Conference in 1784.* John Hampson, jr., sought and obtained ordination from the Established Church, while his father became an Independent minister. They had the right to do this, but there was no legal or moral right that authorized Mr. John Hampson, jr., to become the biographer of Mr. Wesley. He had the temerity to attempt the task, and had not the wisdom to conceal his wounded vanity and personal grievance. "The younger Mr. Hampson," says the biographer of Charles Wesley, "obtained episcopal ordination and the living of Sunderland. He wrote a Life of Mr. Wesley, which he put

* Chronological History of the Methodists, by Wm. Myles, p. 158.

to press with indecent haste, while the remains of that venerable man were scarcely cold in his grave; and spoke of the deceased—to whom he was indebted for his education, and therefore for his preferment—in a manner that reflected little credit upon his heart. His book is a sort of quiver, from which the detractors of Mr. Wesley generally select their arrows.”*

Dr. Hawks resorts to this quiver, and uses some of the arrows with the air of one who seems to be unconscious of appealing to suspicious or disputed sources of information. To the book of Dr. Whitehead also he appeals, and endeavors to qualify, if not to contradict, the statements of Messrs. Coke and Moore, by the assertion of Dr. Whitehead. Mr. Wesley left his papers in charge of three persons—Dr. Coke, Mr. Moore, and Dr. Whitehead.

The connection of Dr. Whitehead with the trust devolved by the will of Mr. Wesley is a story that does no credit to the biographer whose work Dr. Hawks has quoted. When the three executors—Coke, Moore, and Whitehead—met, in 1791, soon after the death of Mr. Wesley, it was resolved to publish a biography which would counteract the malicious statements of Mr. Hampson. Coke and Moore were too busily engaged in ministerial labors to permit them to undertake the task, and it was agreed to leave the work of preparing the volume to Dr. Whitehead. “To him,” says Etheridge, “the MSS. were accordingly confided. And as it could not be expected that a professional man should devote himself gratuitously to the performance of such a work, Dr. Whitehead proposed to Mr. Rogers, the superintendent of the London Cir-

* *Memoir of Charles Wesley*, by Thomas Jackson, p. 414.

cuit, that the author of the biography should be paid one hundred pounds for his trouble and loss of time. The executors and the printing committee thereupon agreed to give him one hundred guineas. This arrangement was concluded about a week before the Conference met, and was confirmed by that body, though not without some misgiving. Many of the preachers had but little confidence in Dr. Whitehead, and his 'antecedents' appear to have justified that uncertainty. A Methodist preacher, a Quaker, a Churchman, and a Methodist again by turns, his versatility of disposition had by no means edified them or others. They nevertheless concurred in the appointment, with the stipulation that Mr. Moore should examine the whole of Mr. Wesley's papers before their contents were published. Here followed a variety of circumlocutions on the part of Dr. Whitehead. A hundred guineas for a work which, were he to publish it on his own account, might yield him two thousand, appeared, on reflection, to be too trifling a return; and he announced his intention to write the book for himself, or, if published at the Conference office, on the condition of his receiving one-half of the profits, the copyright remaining his own. The book committee declined to sanction this change, but for the sake of peace offered to make his fee two hundred guineas. This proffer was on his side declined. An arbitration was then proposed; three friends on each part. On meeting, the Doctor's representatives laid it down as a basis that the copyright must be his own. The three preachers decidedly refused, and the meeting at once dissolved. The ministers' committee then renewed an offer formerly made, that the author

should have half of the profits of the work for two years, provided the work should be read by them in manuscript and approved. Dr. Whitehead replied that he would not submit his writings to any person whatever. Every form of negotiation being thus unfruitful, the committee had no other alternative than that of requesting the other two legatees of the Wesley MSS. to undertake jointly the preparation of a memoir to be published at the Book-room for the benefit of the Connection.* To this Dr. Coke, and Mr. Moore—pressed as they were by peculiar duties—felt constrained to accede, and accordingly they addressed themselves to their task. But wishing, of course, to avail themselves of the papers bearing on the history they were to compose, they had the mortification—on his own account as well as their own—to find that Dr. Whitehead, to whom as one of the trustees, and as the intended author of the biography, they had been confided, refused altogether to give them up. As co-trustees they had as great a right to the custody of the MSS. as himself, and might have soon made good their claim in law; but they were weary of altercation, and left the case to be adjudged at the tribunal of conscience.”†

Under these circumstances of embarrassment and mortification Messrs. Coke and Moore prepared their “*Life of Wesley*.” To expect this work to be all that was desired as a memorial of the founder of Methodism, would be manifestly unjust to all parties. That some errors or imperfect statements should be found in the first edition was inevitable. But the work of

* Smith’s *History of Methodism*, vol. ii., p. 215. † Etheridge’s *Life of Coke*, p. 287.

Dr. Whitehead fully justified the expectations of those who regarded him as morally disqualified for the task. A bitter, uncompromising hostility to Dr. Coke appears in season and out of season in Whitehead's work. He makes no attempt to conceal his animosity to those who have interfered with his mercenary plans. The false statements of this writer have been echoed by High-churchmen in England and America, until the task of exposing and refuting them has been successfully undertaken by a score of respectable writers. But the latest product of High-church literature quotes the versatile Methodist Church-of-England Quaker with as much zest and as great an air of triumph as if these absurdities had never been exposed to the condemnation of honest men of all parties.*

The Life of Wesley, by Coke and Moore, written without access to the papers and manuscripts of Mr. Wesley, and having only the personal knowledge of the authors as the material for the book, was, nevertheless, a remarkable success. In the short space of two months the book cleared seventeen hundred pounds, or nearly eight thousand five hundred dollars.†

As the work of Dr. Hawks has been made the armory from which a section of the adversaries of Methodism have drawn their implements of warfare, the thorough examination of his statements will be a competent reply to those who have repeated his errors without adding any thing of their own. The controversy which assumed a serious phase related to the

*See Beardsley's Life of Seabury, *passim*. †Etheridge's Life of Coke, p. 291.

administration of the ordinances by the Methodist preachers. When did this controversy begin? Was there a reasonable ground for the popular discontent? To what extent did the Episcopal clergymen endeavor to meet the religious wants of those people whom Dr. Hawks calls "seceders from the Episcopal Church?"

There is a vein of unconscious humor in the language of Dr. Hawks which the critical reader will appreciate at its full value. Speaking of the year 1777, he says that "the sacraments were no longer administered in many of the parishes, and this condition of affairs led to an effort on the part of the Methodists to remedy the evil by an irregular ordination of ministers among themselves."* This is a grave, sober truth. The Methodists who desired the ordinances numbered eighteen preachers and nearly four thousand communicants.† Dr. Hawks proceeds to say that "*some* of the clergy of the Church advised them against the measure, but in vain." The "*some*" who did this was *one* man—Rev. Devereaux Jarratt—the good brother who was coolly received at the Episcopal Convention of 1785 because of his connection with the Methodists. Furthermore, it is stated that Francis Asbury, being opposed to the irregular method of obtaining an ordained ministry, "went so far as to write to *some* of the clergy of the Establishment, reproving *them* for not having checked, in its incipient stage, this approach to disorder."‡ Here, again, the "*some*" is one man—the Rev. Devereaux Jarratt. Finally, "to prevent as far as possible a renewal of the complaint

* Protestant Episcopal Church in Virginia, p. 148. † Bennett's Memorials, pp. 109, 112. ‡ Protestant Episcopal Church in Virginia, p. 148.

of the want of the sacraments, *some*, at least, of the Episcopal clergy traveled over large circuits for the purpose of baptizing the children of Methodists and administering the eucharist; and continued to do so until the final separation of the Methodists from the Church, without desiring or receiving for the service the smallest compensation.”* This generosity and self-denial, manifested by *some* of the clergy of the Establishment,” all centered in *one* man—the Rev. Devereaux Jarratt, the *quasi* Methodist preacher. For this act of Christian fellowship he was laughed at, censured, and shunned at the time; but in more recent years the fact is remembered to his credit, and to the shame and confusion of all those unreasonable Methodists who would not let the Rev. Mr. Jarratt do duty for all the Episcopal churches and clergymen of Virginia! This specimen of unconscious humor enlivens the pages of Dr. Hawks, and makes a very difficult theme somewhat entertaining. The affection which certain persons in modern times have manifested for Methodists, if not for Methodism, if it had been felt and exhibited a hundred years ago, would have made the writing of history a more pleasant employment. But “the Church” and “the clergy” of 1784 had no use for the Methodists except to make sport of them.

“It will hardly be imputed to the clergy as a crime that, in the situation to which they found themselves reduced, many should be willing to abandon the country entirely.”† Thus does Dr. Hawks excuse the delinquency of men who professed to be the servants of God and the duly authorized ambassadors for Christ in the colony. The people refused to be taxed for the

* Protestant Episcopal Church in Virginia, p. 149. † Ibid., p. 148.

maintenance of men who proved themselves to be hirelings and not shepherds of the flock. A measure for the establishment of absolute religious equality among all denominations gave the final blow to "the clergy." Their royalist principles they did not conceal, but boasted of them. One of the Episcopal clergymen in New York had the hardihood to insult General Washington in the face of a congregation on the Sabbath-day in 1776. The General had sent word to Mr. Inglis, the rector of the parish, that "he expected to be at church on a given Sabbath, and should be glad if the violent prayers for the King and royal family were omitted on that occasion." Mr. Inglis received the message, but paid no attention to it, repeating the prayers as formerly. At the close of the war this clergyman went to Nova Scotia, and was afterward made a bishop in that province.*

It is by no means difficult to understand why it was that men of this class should abandon the country; but to justify them in doing so is to renounce in their behalf the clerical character they professed, or to confess that they were ill-treated by their Virginia parishioners. In any event, the statement of Dr. Hawks is true, that "the sacraments were no longer administered in many of the parishes, and this condition of affairs led to an effort on the part of the Methodists to remedy the evil by an irregular ordination of ministers among themselves." The flight of the Episcopal ministers was one of the causes which prompted the action of the Methodists, but it was only one of the causes. Long before the war began, or before there was any prospect of a war with the mother country, the

* Wakeley's *Lost Chapters of American Methodism*, p. 97.

agitation of the question concerning the sacraments gave trouble to the itinerant preachers. In the Northern colonies there were only a few clergymen, and these were missionaries employed by the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts. They were High-churchmen almost to a man. With the Methodists they would have no sort of affiliation. People who attended their services were admitted to the communion, but they did not go out of their way to administer the ordinance to any one. Infant children were baptized if presented to the missionaries, but there were very few among the Methodists who regarded the clergy as spiritual leaders at whose hands these holy rites could be received with a good conscience.

Francis Asbury had been in America only thirteen months before he was compelled to consider this question. Under date of December 23, 1772, he gives an account of a quarterly meeting which he attended in Maryland.* The fifth question recorded in this meeting was, "Will the people be contented without our administering the sacraments?" One of the preachers—John King—refused to take any position in the matter. Robert Strawbridge, the pioneer preacher in Maryland, and also in America,† was decidedly in favor of yielding to the wishes of the people. The embarrassment of the case was evident. One of the preachers, whom Mr. Asbury calls "Mr. B.," had set the example, and such were the force of public opinion and the necessities of the case that Mr. Asbury says, "I

* Asbury's Journal, vol. i., p. 38; Bennett's Memorials, p. 110.
†Consult McTyre's History of Methodism; Lost Chapters, Wakeley; etc.

was obliged to connive at some things for the sake of peace." These facts were reported to Mr. Wesley, and he sent Messrs. Rankin and Shadford to America with authority to represent his views and feelings in the matter.* They arrived in June, 1773, and in the following month a conference of the preachers was held in Philadelphia.

It is probable, therefore, that the agitation of this question led to the reënforcement of the preachers in America, and to the beginning of the Annual Conferences, which assemblies have continued until this day. In this Conference it was resolved that the authority of Mr. Wesley extended to America, and that the discipline prevailing in England ought to govern in America also. The consequence was that the Conference determined to refrain from the exercise of rights to which they felt themselves entitled according to the Scriptures. But the Conference was continually admitting new members. The field of operations was enlarging. As a question of expediency simply, it was difficult to cause good men to see the need of obeying a practice in the colonies which worked many hardships in England, and threatened, destruction to the work in America. It was impossible to *settle* the question. It reëappeared in 1774 and 1775. At every Conference arguments, explanations, debates, and entreaties were employed to preserve the "order" which many advocated only because it was agreeable to Mr. Wesley.

But there were many who could not fail to see that Mr. Wesley was not consistent with himself in this matter. In 1746 he had given up the doctrine of apos-

* Etheridge's Life of Coke, p. 125.

tological succession. Nine years later, in 1755, in a letter to Rev. Mr. Walker, of Truro, after recounting the arguments in favor of a separation from the Church of England, Mr. Wesley says: "I will freely acknowledge that I cannot answer these arguments to my own satisfaction. So that my conclusion—which I cannot yet give up—that it is lawful to continue in the Church, stands, I know not how, almost without any premises that are to bear its weight."* If he chose to act from mere sentiment, without a logical reason to sustain his action, it is not surprising that his followers in America should adopt a course which to them was consistent and logical. The shadowy thing known as "the Church" in the colonies was entitled to no consideration whatever. It had no moral influence, no religious power, except in rare instances of clerical fidelity and usefulness.

Asbury led the ranks of the protestants against the new system of ordaining ministers, and the matter was passed by from year to year until it became in Virginia a "burning question." The unfortunate pamphlet on the American war, written by Mr. Wesley, had created a great deal of prejudice against the Methodist preachers. Asbury was an Englishman. The American brethren spoke and wrote of Wesley with great tenderness and love, notwithstanding his bitter opposition to "the rebellion." But there were many persons who were always ready to seize upon any charge that would make Methodism unpopular. The consequence was that Mr. Asbury was suspected; and being unwilling to take the oath prescribed in Maryland, he retired to Delaware, on the 10th of

* Letter to Walker: Wesley's Works, vol. xiii., p. 195.

March, 1778, and found an asylum at the house of a Mr. White. He remained there about seven weeks, and found a great deal of confusion and distress among the people when he returned to his old home.

Meantime the preachers and people in Virginia had been left to their own guidance in ecclesiastical affairs. Seeing the necessity of the times, they had resolved upon a system which would provide the sacraments for the people. A committee was appointed, the requirements for ordination determined, and the work began in good earnest. Dr. Hawks says: "In 1778 a considerable number of the lay preachers earnestly importuned Mr. Asbury, a prominent preacher among the Methodists, to take proper measures that the people might enjoy the privileges of all other Churches, and no longer be deprived of the Christian sacraments."* The historian has sadly confused the dates of these events. The Virginia preachers knew well enough that Mr. Asbury had no power to obtain or to prepare any measures for the purpose. Every man among them stood upon the same footing. None were ordained, and any one of them was as well qualified to institute a ministry as Mr. Asbury himself, so far as ecclesiastical law was concerned.

"Upon the refusal of Mr. Asbury to coöperate with them in their plan of ordination, a majority of the preachers withdrew from all connection with him and Mr. Wesley."† This statement is not correct. The Conference having solemnly considered and debated the subject thoroughly, adopted their plan, and returned to their duties on their respective circuits. The intelligence was conveyed to Mr. Asbury, and it

* Protestant Episcopal Church, p. 148. † Ibid

displeased him, as a matter of course. But this action of the Virginia preachers did not take place in 1778, but at the Conference of 1779. On Wednesday, the 28th of April, 1779, Asbury writes: "As we had great reason to fear that our brethren to the southward were in danger of separating from us, we wrote them a soft, healing epistle." On the 3d of May he wrote to John Dickins, Philip Gatch, Edward Dromgoole, and William Glendenning, "urging them, if possible, to prevent a separation among the preachers in the South—that is, Virginia and North Carolina; and I entertain great hopes," he says, "that the breach will be healed; if not, the consequences may be bad." On the 30th of May he received the Minutes of the Virginia Conference, and called the action of those brethren "a lame separation from the Episcopal Church that will last about one year." The difficulty of the case comes severely home to him, however, as he looks around and sees the young converts given up to the active solicitations of persons who are endeavoring to proselyte them. Under date of July 19, 1779, he says: "A good work is begun, and I fear that division is begun also. But what is to be done? Must we instrumentally get people convinced, and let papists take them from us? No; we will, we must oppose! If the people lose their souls, how shall we answer it before God?" Everywhere souls were reclaimed; and where the song of the drunkard and the voice of the brawler had prevailed, now the songs of Zion were sung, and a great reformation was manifest to all. Still, he adhered to "order." He writes on Monday, July 26, to "our dissenting brethren in Virginia, hoping to reclaim them."

The mind of Asbury was greatly exercised upon the subject of ministerial orders. He writes in his diary, after reading "Comber on Ordination," as follows: "I believe the Episcopal mode of ordination to be more proper than that of the Presbyterians; but I wish there were primitive qualifications in all who handle sacred things." April 1, 1780, he writes: "I received a satisfactory letter from William Moore; he hopes a reconciliation will take place in Virginia, if healing measures are adopted."

Up to this time, therefore, although the Virginia preachers had instituted a new order of things, and had accomplished in point of fact that which Dr. William White advised the Episcopalians to do about the same time, yet they did not "withdraw from all connection with Mr. Asbury and Mr. Wesley." There was no schism accomplished or designed. The point of difference was not one of principle but of expediency only. The Northern Conference met on April 25, 1780, and received a letter from the Virginia brethren. At first it was concluded to renounce them, but Asbury interposed with "conditions of union." These conditions provided that they should ordain no more; that they should come no farther north than Hanover Circuit; delegates must be admitted in their Conference from the Northern; that "they should not presume to administer the ordinances where there is a decent Episcopal minister;" and finally, "to have a union Conference." These terms could not be agreed upon, and at last Asbury offered the suggestion "to propose a suspension of the ordinances for one year, and so cancel all our grievances and be one." This was agreed to by the representatives of the Southern

Conference, and Francis Asbury and Freeborn Garrettson were appointed to attend a meeting of the Virginia Conference, "to bring about peace and union."

In the narrative of Dr. Hawks it is stated that "Mr. Asbury, having obtained his liberty, visited Virginia, and by all the address in his power, with indefatigable labor and attention, succeeded at length in bringing back the seceders one after another, and by a vote of one of the Conferences the ordination was declared invalid, and union was restored." The inaccuracy of this statement will be perceived as we proceed in the true history of the controversy, as given by the principal actors in those scenes

Asbury, Garrettson, and Watters appeared before the Virginia Conference on Tuesday, May 9, 1780. Mr. Wesley's thoughts concerning separation were read. They were familiar to the hearers, and could not meet the conditions surrounding the American preachers. Mr. Asbury presented his case with all the skill that he possessed, and retired, leaving the Conference to their deliberations. "After an hour's conference," says Asbury, "we were called to receive their answer, which was, they could not submit to the terms of union. I then prepared to leave the house, to go to a neighbor's to lodge, under the heaviest cloud I ever felt in America. O what I felt! Nor I alone, but the agents on both sides—they wept like children, but kept their opinions."

Looking back upon these events of more than a century ago, we are astonished at the patience and long-suffering of these men of God. They knew that Mr. Wesley did not understand their surroundings. He could not see as they saw it, the necessity for or-

dained ministers, that the service of the Lord's house "might be perfect, wanting nothing." In England, where the *form* of religion was familiar to the great majority of the people, the deprivation was comparatively slight; and in most cases it was a question of propriety whether to receive the ordinances at the hands of men who were not scriptural shepherds of the flock, but mere hirelings of the State. In America it was a question of receiving the ordinances through the new arrangement or not at all. There was no alternative. No man could tell how long the war might last, and with each new convert to the gospel the issue presented itself—no baptism, no Supper of the Lord. Other denominations taunted the Methodists with this state of things, and the humiliation of such an attitude was great in the extreme. The Presbyterians might have been reminded of the fact that John Calvin had never been ordained at all,* and the Baptists could only point backward a hundred and forty years to Roger Williams and Ezekiel Holliman for the beginning of a "succession of ministerial orders."† The Episcopalians, indeed, might have been reminded of the fact that Thomas Cranmer, the father of the English Reformation, had never been ordained deacon, priest, or bishop, but from the status of a layman stepped at once to the office of an archbishop.

So that in point of principle these "ordaining" brethren in Virginia were on the same platform with John Calvin, Roger Williams, and Thomas Cranmer. But Mr. Asbury turned away from his brethren and prepared to leave them, feeling that they had

* Bayle's Dictionary, Art. "Calvin." † Benedict: History of the Baptists, p. 441.

made a breach in the house of the Lord. "I returned to take leave of the Conference," he says, "and to go immediately to the North; but found they were brought to an agreement while I had been praying, as with a broken heart, in the house we went to lodge at; and brothers Watters and Garrettson had been praying upstairs where the Conference sat. We heard what they had to say. Surely the hand of God has been greatly seen in all this. There might have been twenty promising preachers and three thousand people seriously affected by this separation, but the Lord would not suffer this. We then had preaching by Brother Watters, on 'Come thou with us, and we will do thee good;' afterward we had a love-feast; preachers and people wept, prayed, and talked; so the spirit of dissension was powerfully weakened, and I hoped it would never take place again."

The terms of the compromise which was agreed to at this Conference are not stated in full by Asbury, but William Watters, his spokesman, records them. "The terms of settlement were, that for the sake of peace, and to preserve the unity of Methodism, they should suspend the ordinances until Wesley could be consulted."* Accordingly we find Mr. Asbury in Petersburg on the 12th of May, making this note: "Rest this day to write to Mr. Wesley." But the day of trial was not completely past. Asbury had now to persuade the people to submit to receive the ordinances from the "clergy." On the 23d of May he says: "I have labored to get our friends well affected to the Episcopal Church; what could I do better when we had not the ordinances among us?" Hard task it was to ef-

* Bennett's Memorials, p. 119.

fect *this* reconciliation. In his travels southward Mr. Asbury found the spirit of separation on account of the ordinances prevailing everywhere. On the 16th of September he writes again to Mr. Wesley. He records the fact that it was done "at the desire of the Virginia Conference, who had consented to suspend the administration of the ordinances for one year." To this item in Asbury's journal he appends a note, as follows: "The answer to this letter was made through Dr. Coke, Richard Whatcoat, and Thomas Vasey, in 1784, who all came to America, properly ordained. And here I will take occasion to correct a mistake into which Dr. Whitehead has fallen in his *Life of Mr. Wesley*. It is in that work stated that had Mr. Wesley obtained the consent of the American preachers and people, he might have sent ministers regularly ordained to the Society in that part of the world. The truth is that the American Methodists, both ministers and people, wished to have such ministers among them, that they might partake, like other Christian societies, of the ordinances of the Church of God; and when ministers did thus come, they received them generally and joyfully. I will further presume that Mr. Wesley received few letters from America in which that subject was not pressed upon him."*

Dr. Hawks says: "To prevent, as far as possible, a renewal of the complaint of the want of the sacraments, some at least of the Episcopal clergy traveled over large circuits for the purpose of baptizing the children of Methodists and administering the eucharist." We have already seen that the "some" of Dr.

* Asbury's Journal, vol. i., p. 309.

Hawks amounted to one man, Rev. Devereaux Jarratt. The matter of his tender of service is mentioned by the historian as if it were one of the clauses which entered into the compact. So far from this being the case, it was on the 9th of May, 1780, that the settlement was effected, and the only record that is made of any special tender of service by Mr. Jarratt is in the date of April 21, 1782, in these words: "Mr. Jarratt seemed all life, and determined to spend himself in the work of God, and visit what circuits he could." This is a very slender foundation for the assertion of Dr. Hawks, but it afforded him an opportunity to say that "some of the clergy"—to wit, Mr. Jarratt—did all this, "until the final separation of the Methodists from the Church, without desiring or receiving for the service the smallest compensation." Mr. Jarratt's labors were highly esteemed by the early Methodists. The use that has been made of his connection with them has done great injustice to a worthy man whose memory is still precious to the lovers of Methodism. But the statement that his service operated as a means for restoring the breach in 1780, has no warrant in the history of the time. He wished well to Methodism, and was the earliest *Methodist* preacher in Virginia, as we may see in another place, recorded by his own hand. Although he did not bear the name, his teaching was substantially the same as that of Mr. Wesley and the Methodists, several years before the arrival of Robert Williams.*

But the case is not yet completely before the reader. Such was the earnestness of Asbury and his coadjutors that the Conference made a public record of

*Asbury's Journal, vol. i., p. 158.

their desire to receive the sacraments from worthy ministers among the Episcopalians. At the session of 1780 the question is asked: "Will this Conference grant the privilege to all the friendly clergy of the Church of England, at the request or desire of the people, to preach or administer the ordinances in our preaching-houses or chapels?" The answer is, Yes. Having made a solemn agreement to arrest the action of the Virginia preachers by leaving the matter to the judgment of Mr. Wesley, these men of God kindly invite the Episcopal clergy to come to their relief. Two years later, at a Conference held in Virginia after the memorable surrender of Lord Cornwallis, and as the dawn of peace was becoming apparent in the East, these itinerant preachers have a debt of gratitude to pay. They have called, by vote of Conference, by personal solicitation, and by every appropriate method, and the response to their call is recorded. They appealed to the whole Episcopal clergy for aid in the time of their distress, and an answer came from *one* man—the Rev. Devereaux Jarratt. In these terms a vote of thanks is recorded: "The Conference acknowledge their obligations to the Rev. Mr. Jarratt for his kind and friendly services to the preachers and people from our first entrance into Virginia, and more particularly for attending our Conference in Sussex, in public and private; and advise the preachers in the South to consult him and take his advice in the absence of Brother Asbury."* This is a noble tribute to all parties.

It is asked, "Shall we erase that question proposed in Deer Creek Conference respecting the ordi-

* Minutes of 1782.

nances?" The answer is: "Undoubtedly we must; it can have no place in our Minutes while we stand to our agreement signed in Conference; it is therefore disannulled." Let it be observed that this record does not say that the ordinations in Virginia were pronounced invalid. The determination to administer the ordinances was the purport of the "question;" and while all parties have agreed to consult Mr. Wesley, the ordinances are to be suspended, and the record authorizing them is annulled.

Chapter X.

What is Membership in the Church of England?—Difficult Question—No Register of Members—No List of Communicants—Independent Churches only use Registers—Members of the Establishment—Was Washington a Member of the Church?—Did not take the Lord's Supper—An Exception—Baptism and the Supper—Regeneration and Life—King, Hooker, and others—*Ipsso Facto* Excommunication—Result in the Case of Washington—John Hales, the "Ever Memorable"—Tract on Schism—Chillingworth—Ferocious Treatment—Archbishop Tillotson—Branding Dissent as Heresy—Separation from the Church—Brewster's Essay—John Wesley More Consistent than Charles—No Answer to the Query—Missionaries—Dr. White—Loyal Clergymen—Winterbotham's Prediction—First Steps toward Episcopal Organization—Circular Letters—Small Numbers—No Invitation to Methodists—Asbury Ignored—No Liking for "Enthusiasm"—A Wise Movement.

ONE of the most difficult questions that can be propounded is, What does it require to constitute a member of the Church of England? The universal custom of Protestant Churches—except those that are established by the State—requires a church-register, upon which is recorded the name of each member. No system of government is possible without definite terms of membership and permanent records of the members of a church.

A State Church has no register of members, because it is assumed that every citizen belongs to the Establishment. From the time of Constantine the Great to this day the union of Church and State has been greatly prejudicial to every interest of the kingdom

of Christ. "My kingdom is not of this world," said the Saviour, and the spiritual wants of men can never be supplied by carnal means. That Christianity has survived the unholy alliance with the State is due to the influence of pure religion, preserved in spite of the errors and wickedness of the great body of the people, by means of independent societies and the spirit of dissent or non-conformity. Left to itself, any national Church would become corrupt, whether it looks to Rome or to Canterbury for its ecclesiastical institutions.

The existence of a list of members is a protest against a State Church and a prophecy of Church independence. Upon very small "class-papers" the names of early Methodists were recorded; but the church-register followed necessarily after the class-paper as soon as the "Church" took the place of the "Society." In America, among Episcopalians, there was, properly speaking, no Church in existence before the Revolution. If the bonds of organization are required to make a union, there is nothing to be found in the history of Virginia which resembles it. A record of births, baptisms, marriages, and deaths was kept in some parishes, with more or less correctness. Clergymen came to Virginia, were installed in parishes, and performed their duties without any superior power to overlook them, and without any check upon their manner of life. The only possible method of excluding a clergyman from the province was to refuse to pay his salary. This was at the option of his vestrymen, and, if he pleased them, there was no power that could reach him.

It followed that as dissenters multiplied in Virginia

it became more and more difficult to determine who belonged to the Establishment. Every native of the colony did not; that was evident. "I am a member of the Church of England," said General Washington to a Presbyterian minister one day during the war, "but I have no exclusive partialities."* He desired to know if the Doctor intended to administer the Lord's Supper on the following Sunday, as he wished to partake of the communion. This is an authentic record of at least one occasion on which the Father of his Country identified himself with the followers of Christ. That he was not in the habit of receiving the communion we shall see presently.

Now, what was it that made Washington "a member of the Church of England?" Not his baptism, for many who are baptized by Episcopal clergymen do not adhere to the Episcopal Church.† Mr. Wes-

* Writings of Washington, vol. xii., p. 410.

† The benefits of baptism, according to the Prayer-book of the Church of England, are grouped together in the following extract: "It remains now to speak of the spiritual benefits which result from holy baptism to those who duly receive it according to the ordinance of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. They are spoken of in the Offices as 'a washing and sanctifying with the Holy Ghost, a deliverance from the wrath of God, a receiving into the ark of Christ's Church, a remission of sins by spiritual regeneration, an embracing with the arms of God's mercy, a gift of the blessing of eternal life, a participation of God's everlasting kingdom, a bestowal of the Holy Spirit, a being born again and made heir of everlasting salvation, a release from sins, a gift of the kingdom of heaven and everlasting life, a burial of the old Adam and raising up of the new man, an induing with heavenly virtues, a mystical washing away of sin, a regeneration and grafting into the body of Christ's Church, a death unto sin and a living unto righteousness, a putting on of Christ.'"—(Blunt's Annotated Book of Common Prayer, p. 405.)

ley's definition, although somewhat obscure, is at least better than none. A member of the Church of England, he tells us,* is "a believer, hearing the pure word of God preached, and partaking of the sacraments duly administered in that Church." Now, if it had chanced that Washington's home lay in the parish of one of those clergymen who ridiculed the doctrines of Christianity at Williamsburg in 1774, failing to hear the pure word of God preached, he would cease to be "a member of the Church of England in America." But, as the Rev. William White was for several years the President's pastor in Philadelphia, the first part of Mr. Wesley's definition is complied with. But is a man who does not partake of the Lord's Supper a member of the Church? Mr. Wesley says no. He must partake of the sacraments. This General Washington did not do. Under date of August 15, 1835, Bishop White says: "In regard to the subject of your inquiry truth requires me to say that General Washington never received the communion in the churches of which I am parochial minister. Mrs. Washington was an habitual communicant."† The biographer of Bishop White says: "Though the General attended the churches in which Dr. White officiated whenever he was in Philadelphia during the Revolutionary War, and afterward while President of the United States, he never was a communicant in them. This fact does not disprove his belief in and respect for Christianity. For it is well known that some whose religious sincerity could not reasonably be doubted have been led to avoid a participation in that sacred ordinance from sincere, though over-

* Works, vol. viii., p. 280. † Life of Bishop White, p. 197

strained and mistaken, reverence for it.”* This implies defective teaching on the part of the ministry.

It is not probable that General Washington was kept from the communion-table by an “overstrained and mistaken reverence.” Nor is it probable that any explanation will ever be found for his conduct in this respect. We may offer conjectures, but they fall far short of proofs. But the object of introducing his case is to arrive at a solution of the question, “What is a member of the Church of England?” We know what it is to be a member of the Baptist, the Presbyterian, or the Methodist Church. Certain conditions precedent are stated in terms perfectly intelligible to all. The Episcopalians in Virginia had no church-register—no name was recorded. A man claiming to be a member in one parish could not carry proof of the fact to another. There were no “certificates of membership.” If a man should discard Quakerism and come to “the Church,” there was no way to record or to preserve the memory of the fact. If as a dissenter he went to the Lord’s Supper, he was not repelled—as a Churchman he received no better treatment. What privilege, then, distinguished a Churchman from a Presbyterian or a Lutheran? Nothing can be named except the good-will and social advantages which belonged to the “Establishment.” These were only the effects of a system which had been ingrafted upon the body politic, and there was nothing essentially religious in the name of “Churchman.”

But there are those in the Church of England who deny the character of Christians to all persons who fail or refuse to receive the sacrament of the Lord’s

* Life of Bishop White, p. 188.

Supper. One of the ministers of the Church, in his "Lectures on the one Catholic and Apostolic Church," Rev. Robert Jarrold King, says: "Our Lord said, with reference to the eucharist, that except a man be rightly a partaker of it, he had no spiritual life in him, and that if he be rightly a partaker of it, he dwells in Christ and Christ in him." * The "Judicious Hooker," in his "Ecclesiastical Polity," says: "The grace which we have by the holy eucharist doth not *begin* but *continues* life. No man, therefore, receiveth this sacrament before baptism, because no dead thing is capable of nourishment. That which groweth must of necessity first live." † This view of the Lord's Supper naturally leads to the doctrine of Pusey, and this to the Roman Church.

But, right or wrong, this is the theory of the Church of England. A soul is regenerated in baptism, and grows up into Christ through the sacrament of the Supper. "There is not any other way of entering the holiest by the blood and through the flesh of Christ, which harmonizes with the whole scope of this passage (Heb. x. 20) and with those which come after it, but by the persons who desire to enter in being partakers of the holy communion of the body and blood of Christ." ‡ If this doctrine be true, what becomes of the baptized persons who never go to the communion-table? What was the religious status of George Washington?

This is only a portion of the problem involved in membership in the Church of England. By the canons of the Church any person who denies any one of

* Lectures on the Church Universal, p. 150. † Ecclesiastical Polity, bk. v., c. 67, sec. 1. ‡ King's Lectures, p. 269.

the Thirty-nine Articles, or speaks against the authority of the King in causes ecclesiastical, is *ipso facto* excommunicated*—he is cut off from the Church of God. Now, can it be believed that George Washington, when fighting the armies of George III., accepted the doctrine of the royal supremacy in causes ecclesiastical? Did Washington believe that the King of England was the rightful governor of his soul at the time that he was repudiating political allegiance to the British sovereign? According to the law of the Church, Washington and every Whig in America was expelled from the Church of England by virtue of the act of rebellion against the King. There was not, therefore, among the patriots of America a member of the Church of England at the close of the war. The esteemed Dr. White was excommunicated by becoming the chaplain of a rebel Congress. Every clergyman who refused to pray for the success of King George's armies was *ipso facto*, by the fact itself, without any measures, movements, orders, or actions whatever by the ecclesiastical authorities, expelled from the Church.

To be excluded from the communion of the Church of England by *ipso facto* laws is one thing, and to *separate* from the Church is another. A great deal of absurdity has been written about the sin of schism. A deadly offense it is proclaimed to be, and the heaviest penalties are incurred by it. But what is schism? The "ever-memorable John Hales" has written the best essay upon this subject that the English language affords. He was a Calvinist of the Church of England type, and attended the Synod of Dort, in 1619, in the

* Canons of the Church of England, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8.

capacity of chaplain to Sir Dudley Carlton, King James's ambassador. Listening to the masterly address of Episcopius in behalf of the Arminians, Hales, to use his own apt phrase, "bid Calvinism good-night." On his return to England he wrote his famous tract on Schism for the use of his friend William Chillingworth. It was not intended for publication, but soon found its way to the press, and has maintained its position among the very first productions of the sixteenth century.

Mr. Hales defines schism to be "the unnecessary separation of Christians from that part of the visible Church of which they were once members." He ranges all schism into two ranks: "1. In which only one party is schismatic; for where cause of schism is necessary, there not he that separates, but he that occasions the separation, is schismatic. 2. In which both parties are the schismatic; for where the occasion of separation is unnecessary, neither side can be excused from the guilt of schism." *

The unfortunate Chillingworth was destined to experience the severity of the sin of schism in his own person. Early in life a Romanist, he became a Protestant, and wrote the famous work which has given a watch-word to the Reformation: "The Bible alone is the religion of Protestants." At the beginning of the Civil War he became a partisan of the King, and was captured by the Parliamentary army. He was taken to Chichester, where he died in 1644. A wretched bigot, Mr. Cheynell, whose name has been recorded in history only because he had an opportunity to insult and persecute a dying man, visited Mr.

* Tract on Schism: Sparks, Theological Essays, v., p. 25.

Chillingworth on his death-bed. This heartless creature published a tract in which he consigned himself to infamy in an account of "The Sickness, Heresy, Death, and Burial of William Chillingworth." Cheynell was rector of Petworth, and in his parish the helpless man lingered for some time before death released him from the persecution of a professed minister of Christ. After insulting the man on his couch of pain, this rector of Petworth accused him of deadly heresy, and refused to permit his body to be buried with the service appointed by the English Liturgy. The friends of Chillingworth attended his funeral, and there this "rector" appeared, not to express sympathy for the deceased, but to assault his memory by the foulest of calumnies. Chillingworth was branded as a hypocrite, a conceded papist, not a genuine son of the Church of England, etc., and his book was thrown into the grave, while Mr. Cheynell pronounced these words: "Get thee gone, then, thou cursed book, which hast seduced so many precious souls. Get thee gone, thou corrupt, rotten book; earth to earth, and dust to dust. Get thee gone into the place of rottenness, that thou mayest rot with thy author and see corruption!"* This extraordinary tirade was pronounced against a book which has taken its place among the English classics.

We have here a case of undoubted *schism*. A man refuses to bury a brother minister, a member of his own Church, and carries the controversies of this life into the grave of a helpless mortal. The maxim of the heathens, that one should speak only that which is good of the dead, he not only refuses to obey, but

* Life of Chillingworth, p. 362.

quotes the words, and boasts of his having violated a sentiment which does honor to humanity. Why was this? Political antipathy had somewhat to do with the case, but there was a stronger reason still. Mr. Chillingworth was not a Calvinist, and Mr. Cheynell was. One was the advocate of a system of theology that confessed itself opposed to the dictates of reason, and the other endeavored to place the doctrines of the Bible in such a light that they might not shock those principles of justice that are inseparable from the human understanding.

“I know not how it comes to pass,” says Archbishop Tillotson, “whether through the popish party, who hate the light lest it should reprove them and make them manifest, or through the ignorance of too many well-meaning Protestants; I say I know not how it comes to pass, but so it is, that every one that offers to give a reasonable account of his faith, and to establish religion upon rational principles, is presently branded for a Socinian, of which we have a sad instance in that incomparable person, Mr. Chillingworth, the glory of this age and nation, who for no other cause that I know of but his worthy and successful attempts to make the Christian religion reasonable, and to discover those firm and solid foundations upon which our faith is built, hath been requited with this black and odious character. But if this be Socinianism, for a man to inquire into the grounds and reasons of the Christian religion, and endeavor to give a satisfactory account why he believes it, I know no way but that all considerate inquisitive men that are above fancy and enthusiasm must be either Socinians or atheists.” *

* Tillotson's Sermons, vol. xi., p. 4966.

To create discord in the bosom of the Church; to promote uncharitable, censorious, and unbrotherly conduct; to refuse to recognize our fellow-Christians at the table of the Lord because they follow not with us, and do not believe precisely as we do—this is schism, and nothing else is. Separation may or may not be the product of schism. Mr. Wesley gives us his definition of separation from the Church of England as follows: "At present I apprehend those, and those only, to separate from the Church who either renounce her fundamental doctrines or refuse to join in her public worship." * According to the terms of this definition it is difficult to say whether the American Methodists separated from the Church or not. Who shall determine what the "fundamental doctrines" are? Mr. Wesley would make the list a very short one. Mr. Toplady would add many articles that Wesley would exclude. But surely no man of religious culture, however superficial, would refuse to join in the worship of a Church at which he was present. Superstitious observances among the Romanists are not expected of Protestants, but respectful and serious behavior is the duty of a gentleman who finds himself in a public assembly wherein the worship of God is professed.

We find ourselves at a loss, then, to determine what constitutes a member of the Church of England, and what *separation* is. It has never been charged that Methodists have renounced any fundamental doctrines of the gospel. On the contrary, it has been repeatedly acknowledged that the Wesleyans have rendered essential service to the Church in promoting morality

* Wesley's Works, vol. xiii., p. 195.

and true piety throughout England. A "Report of the Clergy in a District of the Diocese of Lincoln" in the year 1800, while classifying "the people called Methodists," places in the first rank "persons professing to be members of the Church of England, who regularly attend divine service at church, and partake of the holy sacrament, but have places set apart for additional exercises of devotions at such hours as do not interfere with the Church service. These we do not consider as enemies to the ecclesiastical Establishment, much less as contributing to the neglect or perversion of religious worship, but, on the contrary, have found them useful and zealous auxiliaries in reforming and reclaiming many habitual sinners, both by their admonition and example." * So long as these convenient and serviceable laborers are satisfied with a position in which they are tolerated for their work's sake, all is well. But the second section of Methodists consists of well-meaning but ignorant persons who are "not sufficiently aware of the unlawfulness" of administering the sacraments to the people whom the Lord has given them. These are guilty of schism and grievous wickedness.† Among these the annals of High-churchmen place Adam Clarke, Richard Watson, Joseph Benson, and Jabez Bunting!

Mr. Sidney, in his *Life of the Rev. Samuel Walker, of Truro*, speaking of the attitude of the Wesleyans in England, says: "They have never formally professed *dissent*, whereby they are placed in a different position from that of Non-conformists in general; but, though dissent has not been proclaimed by them, they are dissenters. They forsake our discipline and our orders,

* Brewster's Essay, p. 176. † Ibid., p. 177.

while they have no objection to our episcopacy or our services; and it may be, as Watson observes, 'there is a warmer regard toward the Church among the body of Methodists now than there was in the days of Mr. Wesley.' In their teaching, also, they are in a great degree at variance with our articles, which are far from sanctioning their views of faith, justification, imputed righteousness, perfection, and their notions of the power of the human will. As long, however, as the Methodists retain the peculiar doctrines before alluded to, the standard we subscribe renders all prospects of a formal union a visionary scheme; nor can the Church assent to their methods of applying the services of laymen." *

By attendance at church in canonical hours Mr. John Wesley preserved, after a fashion, a sort of consistency; but Charles Wesley, High-churchman as he was, did not fail to hold service in church hours, administering the communion in unconsecrated places at the same hour that the rector of the parish was similarly employed in the parish church.

* *Life of Samuel Walker*, pp. 237, 238, 239. Mr. Sidney's opinion has been justified by the event. If a "formal union" of the Wesleyans and the Established Church had been possible prior to 1882, it is now out of the question. In that year the final steps were taken that placed Wesleyan Methodism on the basis of a true, independent Church of Christ, having adopted the Twenty-five Articles prepared by Mr. Wesley as the symbol of faith for the American Methodist Church. Mr. Sidney devotes a large part of a bulky volume to the correspondence between Mr. Walker and the Wesleys. A convenient abridgment of John Wesley's part of the correspondence gives a false notion of the matter in controversy. Mr. Sidney endeavors to prove that Samuel Walker and Thomas Adam did as much or more than the Wesleys toward the great revival of the eighteenth century. A grim commentary on this assertion is seen

“For twenty years he made more noise on the subject of the continued union of the Methodists with the Church than any man of the age, and all this while he was, beyond comparison, the greatest practical separatist in the whole Connection. Mr. John Wesley spent most of his time in traveling through Great Britain and Ireland, often preaching twice every day and two or three times on the Sabbath. Rarely, however, did he preach in church hours, except when he officiated for a brother clergyman. Many of the itinerant preachers pursued the same course. They preached to their own congregations at an early hour on the Sunday morning, at noon, and in the evening, and in the forenoon and afternoon they were present with their people at the service of the Church. This was the recognized plan of Methodist practice, and though several refused to conform to it, especially where the clergy were unfriendly or immoral, yet others were even zealous for it, especially where the clergy were kind and tolerant.

“But this was not the state of things in London under the administration of Mr. Charles Wesley. He preached during church hours every Sabbath, and indulged the Societies with a weekly sacrament at their

in the fact that even the English editor of Mr. Wesley's works did not know the *name* of Mr. Walker's ardent friend. In Vol. XIII. of Wesley's Works Rev. Thomas *Adam* appears as Rev Thomas *Adams*! Mr. Sidney says that John Wesley's correspondence with Samuel Walker ended with Wesley's letter to Mr. Walker, dated September 3, 1756. The truth is that John Wesley wrote two other letters to Mr. Walker, one under date of September 16, 1757, and the other dated October, 1758. This correspondence is evidently cut short in order to place Mr. Wesley in a disadvantageous light. But history will vindicate the world's heroes sooner or later.

own places of worship, so that they had no opportunity of attending their several churches, nor any motive to attend them. He conducted divine worship, indeed, according to the order of the Church of England, except that he used extemporaneous prayer and sung his own beautiful hymns; but he and the Society had no more connection with the Established Church than any dissenting minister and congregation had. He was under no Episcopal control; the chapels in which he officiated were licensed by no bishop; and the clergy in whose parishes those chapels were situated were never consulted as to the time and manner of divine service. The uneasiness which frequently arose in some of the country Societies took its origin in part from this state of things. They wished to be upon an equality with their metropolitan brethren, and they were never satisfied, either during the lifetime of the Wesleys, or after their death, till this was conceded to them."*

Thus it appears that Charles Wesley, whom High-churchmen delight to quote as a persistent friend of union with the Church, was the only man whose example promoted absolute separation from it. The brothers were both inconsistent with themselves and with their own principles at different times and places, but no man who is acquainted with the facts in each case can impeach their motives. Dearly as Charles Wesley held the rigid Church prejudices which he had inherited, he esteemed the salvation of souls above all the forms and ceremonies in the world. John Wesley's whole system was the offspring of providential developments. He planned, arranged,

* Jackson's *Life of Charles Wesley*, pp. 426, 427.

and executed his plans in the light of the gospel message to dying men. Whatever measure advanced the salvation of souls, or seemed likely to do so, he readily adopted and retained it only so long as it appeared to be suited to his purpose. He could afford to be inconsistent in his means, who never wavered for a moment from the end he had in view. The polar star was not more steady in its place than John Wesley in promoting the glory of God and the religious welfare of his fellow-men.

“When Mr. Smyth pressed us to ‘separate from the Church,’ he meant ‘go to Church no more.’ And this was what I meant seven and twenty years ago, when I persuaded our brethren ‘not to separate from the Church.’ But here another question occurs: ‘What is the Church of England?’ It is not ‘all the people of England.’ Papists and dissenters are no part thereof. It is not all the people of England except papists and dissenters. Then we should have a glorious Church indeed! No; according to our Twentieth Article a particular Church is a ‘congregation of faithful people’ (*cetus fidelium*, the words in our Latin edition), ‘among whom the word of God is preached and the sacraments duly administered.’ What, then, according to this definition, is the Church of England?”*

Thus, in his letter to Charles in 1785, he propounds the question which we find, as he did, unanswerable. A vague, uncertain thing is this membership in the Church of England! A man does nothing to get into it; is required to do nothing to remain in; and does nothing in order to get out of it. He is excommuni-

* Wesley's Works, vol. xiii., p. 253.

cated without a trial, as he is received without his own consent. He pronounces himself a member, and he is accepted as one. According to the whim of a bishop, or the malice of a bigot, he is declared out of the Church, although he may be in it; and at another time is as confidently maintained a member of it when he steadfastly affirms the contrary!

It is impossible to obtain the statistics of the early Methodists in America in order to ascertain what proportion of them ever attended the service of the Episcopal clergymen. It is susceptible of proof that the revival of religion in which the itinerant preachers were engaged brought a large number of communicants to the Lord's Supper in Maryland and Virginia. In many instances the number of communicants at the table of the Episcopal churches was not only much larger, but the revival alone brought a greater number than had ever communicated before. A fictitious prosperity, which they had done nothing to promote, was thrust upon the clergy and the Church. The various "diaries" and "journals" of the time furnish us with a rule by which we may determine the amount of encouragement which the Methodists received at the hands of the Episcopal ministers. Mr. Asbury, Mr. Rankin, Messrs. Boardman and Pilmoor, and all the English preachers, endeavored to create a sentiment favorable to the Church, and they sought by all practicable means to induce the people to attend the service at the parish churches.

But there were only a few missionaries north of Maryland. There were eighty Episcopal ministers at the beginning of the war, and perhaps not one-third of those remained at the close of the struggle. Some of

these were royalists, who had committed themselves too seriously to escape from the resentments of the Whigs, and, as a matter of necessity, emigrated to British territory. The Memoirs of Dr. William White will assist us in determining the status of the American Methodists in 1784, and the esteem in which they were held by the "clergy." We shall be able to see from the history he has furnished us that the action of our Methodist forefathers was as fully justified as it could be by any series of events which could authorize the organization of an independent Church.

Speaking of the difficulties in the way of the Episcopal Churches at the close of the war, he says: "To add to the evil, many able and worthy ministers, cherishing their allegiance to the King of Great Britain, and entertaining conscientious scruples against the use of the Liturgy under the restriction of omitting the appointed prayers for him, ceased to officiate. Owing to these circumstances the doors of the far greater number of the Episcopal churches were closed for several years. In the State in which this work is edited there was, through its whole extent, but one resident minister of the Church in question—he who records the fact." *

This is a very gentle statement of the case, and it is made by one who was chaplain to the American Congress, and had no political sympathy with his royalist brethren. But he proceeds, in his "Additional Statements," added at a later period, to present the religious situation which the early Methodists, as we have seen in the previous chapter, endeavored to improve by the irregular ordination of ministers.

* White's Memoirs, p. 17.

“In Maryland and Virginia,” says Dr. White, “there were many of the clergy whose connections with their flocks were rendered by their personal characters dependent wholly on the Church establishment, and of course fell with it. Again, many worthy ministers entertained scruples in regard to the oath of allegiance to the States, without the taking of which they were prohibited from officiating by laws alike impolitic and severe. But it must be seen that scruples of this sort were of another nature than the question here stated for consideration. In the Northern States there were no such laws, but the clergy generally declined officiating on the ground of their ecclesiastical tie to the Liturgy of the Church of England. As they were generally men of respectable characters, the discontinuance of their administrations had an unhappy effect on the Church, and is here mentioned as one cause contributing to the low state in which we were left by the Revolutionary War.”*

“The inhabitants of Wilmington, Newbern, Edenton, and Halifax districts in North Carolina,” says Winterbotham in 1793, “making about three-fifths of the State, once professed themselves of the Episcopal Church. The clergy in those districts were chiefly missionaries, and in forming their political attachments at the commencement of the late war personal safety, or real interest, or perhaps a conviction of the impolicy of opposing Great Britain, from whence they derived their salaries, induced them almost universally to declare themselves in favor of the British Government, and to emigrate. There may be one or two of the original clergy remaining, but at present they have

* White's Memoirs, p. 82.

no particular pastoral charge; indeed, the inhabitants in the districts above mentioned seem now to be making the experiment whether Christianity can exist long in a country where there is no visible Christian Church. The Baptists and the Methodists have sent a number of missionary preachers into these districts, and some of them have large congregations. It is probable that one or the other of these denominations, and perhaps both, may acquire consistency, and establish permanent churches.”* The sagacity of this writer is attested by the existence of more than eighty-five thousand Methodist communicants in the white population of North Carolina at the present time.

This was the state of affairs when “the first step toward the forming of a collective body of the Episcopal Church in the United States was taken at a meeting for another purpose of a few clergymen of New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania, at Brunswick, in New Jersey, on the 13th and 14th of May, 1784.”†

Whether the meetings held at the house of Dr. White, in Philadelphia, can be called “a step toward the forming of a collective body,” we cannot say; but those meetings were held in March and April preceding the meeting in Brunswick. Drs. White and Magaw had a conversation which led to a meeting at the house of Dr. White, rector of Christ Church and St. Peter’s. At this first meeting there were two clergymen and two laymen present. “The body thus assembled, after taking into consideration the necessity of speedily adopting measures for the forming a plan of

* Winterbotham’s History of the United States, vol. iii., p. 211.

† White’s Memoirs, p. 82.

ecclesiastical government for the Episcopal Church, are of opinion that a subject of such importance ought to be taken up, if possible, with the concurrence of the Episcopalians generally in the United States. They therefore resolve to ask a conference with such members of the Episcopal congregations in the counties of this State as are now in town, and they authorize the clergymen now present to converse with such persons as they can find of the above description, and to request their meeting this body at Christ's Church on Wednesday evening at seven o'clock." *

On the 31st of March, 1784, "the clergy and the two committees assembled, according to adjournment (all of the members being present except M Clarkson, Esq., detained by sickness), and the body thus assembled elected Dr. White their chairman. The clergy reported that agreeably to the appointment of the last meeting they had spoken to several gentlemen, who readily consented to the proposed conference. The meeting continued some time, when it was signified to them that several gentlemen who had designed to attend were detained by the unexpected sitting of the honorable House of Assembly, they being members of that House. The Hon. Samuel Read, Esq., attended according to desire.

"After some conversation on the business of this meeting it was resolved that a circular letter be addressed to the Church-wardens and vestrymen of the respective Episcopal congregations in the State, and that the same be as followeth, viz.:

"*Gentlemen:* The Episcopal clergy in this city, together with a committee appointed by the vestry of Christ's Church and St. Peter's,

* Fac-similes of Church Documents, D. 22.

and another committee appointed by the vestry of St. Paul's Church in the same, for the purpose of proposing a plan of ecclesiastical government, being now assembled, are of opinion that a subject of such importance ought to be taken up, if possible, with the concurrence of the Episcopalians generally in the United States. They have therefore resolved, as preparatory to a general consultation, to request the Church-wardens and vestrymen of each Episcopal congregation in the State to delegate one or more of their body to assist at a meeting to be held in this city on Monday, the 24th day of May, and such clergymen as have parochial cure in the said congregations to attend the meeting, which they hope will contain a full representation of the Episcopal Church in this State. The above resolve, gentlemen, the first step in their proceedings, they now respectfully and affectionately communicate to you. Signed in behalf of the body now assembled:

WILLIAM WHITE, *Chairman.*"

"Resolved, That a circular letter be sent to some one gentleman in each of the said congregations, and that copies of the same be left with the chairman, the respective directions to be supplied by him after due inquiry, and that the letter be as followeth, viz.:

"Sir: The body herein mentioned, being informed that you are a member of the Episcopal Church in ———, and always ready to attend to its concerns, take the liberty of requesting you to deliver the inclosed. Signed in behalf of the said body:

"WILLIAM WHITE, Chairman."

"Resolved, That the letters addressed to the churches formerly included in the mission of Radnor be inclosed under cover to the Rev. W. Currie, their former pastor, and the clergy are desired to accompany them with a letter to the said reverend gentleman, requesting his assistance at the proposed meeting.

"Resolved, That, as the Rev. Joseph Fletcher is the minister of the churches formerly included in the mission of Lancaster, the circular letter be addressed to him, and not to the Church-wardens and vestrymen of the said congregations.

“Resolved, That it be recommended to the vestries under whose appointments these proceedings are made to cause the same to be read to their respective congregations on Easter Monday at their annual election of Church-wardens and vestrymen. The chairman is empowered to call meeting at any time previous to Easter. Adjourned.”

These minutes of the meetings in Philadelphia show that the movement which resulted in the organization of the Episcopal Church began in that city, and the subsequent events are of special interest. On the 6th of April the clergy and the committees met, the same persons being present, except Mr. Read. “The chairman reported that he had forwarded to every Church of which he could receive information.” Two small congregations were reported, of whose location it could not be determined whether they were in Delaware or Pennsylvania. If the chairman found that they were in Pennsylvania they were to be notified. The letters sent out were to Radnor, Lancaster, Oxford, All-saints, Whitemarch, Bristol, Reading, Morlatten, Carlisle, York, “a Church near York,” Chester, Marcus Hook, and Concord. Thus there were *fourteen* Episcopal congregations, and among them there were only two ministers outside of Philadelphia, and but two in the city. By this account we have *four* Episcopal ministers in the State in the month of April, 1784.

Now where were the Methodists, “members of the Church of England in America?” The Rev. Mr. Magaw was well acquainted with Francis Asbury, and had preached to congregations of Methodists in Delaware and Maryland during the war. Asbury notices him several times in his Journal, and speaks of him as a

brother whose kindness and affection were manifest. Why did not Mr. Magaw call Dr. White's attention to the fact that there were several hundred Methodist people in Pennsylvania who were regarded as members of the Episcopal Church, and that these Methodist Episcopalians had flourishing Societies in Philadelphia, York, and elsewhere? Mr. Asbury and a conference of preachers, more in number than *all* the Episcopal clergymen in the thirteen colonies at that time, were in session in Sussex county, Va., on the 29th of April. The Rev. Mr. Jarratt was there, but not a word is mentioned to the itinerant preachers about a plan for a government for *their* Church in the United States.

Does any man believe that Dr. White regarded Mr. Asbury as a member of the Episcopal Church in the United States? If he had so regarded him, would the project of a convention of the Church be undertaken without giving notice to the Methodist preachers in Pennsylvania? That was the time for Dr. White and his friends to claim the fellowship of his Methodist brethren. If he had done so, the pretense that the Methodists *separated* from the Episcopal Church in America would have had some foundation, some evidence to support it.

The convention called for the 24th of May, 1784, met in Philadelphia according to appointment. On that day Francis Asbury was holding his conference with the Methodist preachers in Baltimore. A letter had been received by him from Mr. Wesley, in which Asbury was appointed "general assistant," with full authority to represent Mr. Wesley, "and to receive no preachers from Europe that are not recommended by

him, nor any in America who will not submit to me and to the minutes of the conference.”* As far as the records of both parties go, there does not seem to have been a word of communication between the Methodist preachers, whom Dr. Hawks claimed as members of the Episcopal Church, and the parties who were taking steps to *organize* a new Church in the United States. Asbury and his co-laborers were not “clergymen” in the technical sense of the term. They were not vestrymen nor Church-wardens, but if they were *members* of the Episcopal Society they deserved the ordinary respect of a notice of some kind to let them know that measures were being inaugurated for the creation of a Church. It is scarcely possible that Dr. White could be ignorant of Asbury’s struggle on the subject of the ordinances. It is certain that Dr. White’s coadjutor, Dr. Magaw, was well informed concerning the matter, for he was present when the question was discussed by Asbury and his friends in Delaware and in Maryland. Why did not Dr. White do as any other liberal-spirited gentleman would have done in such a case? Why did he not write to Mr. Asbury, or suggest to Dr. Magaw to do so, and inform him that the controversy concerning the ordinances would be settled in a short time by placing the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States upon an independent footing? Is it morally possible that a man who had the welfare of the Lord’s people on his heart should take such important steps as Dr. White did, and calmly, coolly, studiously ignore the majority of the members of his Church in Pennsylvania?

*Asbury’s Journal, vol. i, p. 363.

It is not conceivable upon any hypothesis that has ever been given for the government of human actions. The truth is, Dr. White had no liking for the Methodists. He had no association with them; did not approve of their methods, and was dreadfully afraid of their "enthusiasm." His biographer, Dr. Wilson, takes occasion to introduce the aged Bishop, in his eighty-second year, recording his impressions of the preaching of Whitefield. Of that great man he expresses an opinion that can only be correctly stated in his own words: "The first consideration which weakened his authority with me was a comparison of his obligations assumed at ordination with his utter disregard of them, a subject new to me when his case presented it. That Mr. Whitefield had some expedient reconciling his mind to his deviations cannot reasonably be doubted; but in consideration of what he has said in print of his having been carried away by impressions and feeling, it is not uncharitable to class his case among the many in which enthusiasm, consistently with general good intentions, leads to results not consistent with moral obligation." In one of his appended notes the Bishop adds: "It has been urged, in favor of the animal feelings excited by the preaching of Mr. Whitefield, and of other preachers of the same stamp, that however many the subsequent declensions, a portion of the converts are reclaimed from sin and continue faithful. The question of the expedience of any specified means of conversion should rest, not on this ground, but on Scripture in alliance with the dictates of reason and of prudence." He proceeds to draw a comparison between the "probable number of persons who are brought to a religious

state and a suitable life by a preaching not attended by the extravagances alluded to," and the subjects of revival excitements. "So far as my personal observation extends, what are sometimes called revivals would suffer much by the comparison."*

It is probable that Bishop White's acquaintance with genuine revivals of religion was exceedingly limited, but it is positively certain that Dr. White's fellowship for the Methodist people had no outward expression in 1784; therefore, when the convention met in New York in October there was not a man present who had been in any way connected with "the people called Methodists." Volunteers appeared from Massachusetts, Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, and Maryland. One clergyman, Dr. Griffiths, from Virginia, appeared as a spectator simply, "the clergy of that State, being restricted by laws yet in force there, were not at liberty to send delegates, or consent to any alteration in the order, government, doctrine, or worship of the Church."† Sixteen clergymen and eleven laymen were present, and after the adoption of several general principles of ecclesiastical union they called a convention to be held on "the Tuesday before the feast of St. Michael," in the city of Philadelphia. This convention met in September, 1785, and while they were engaged in preparing the way for a regular organization of a Church, the "Methodist Episcopal Church in America" had unfurled its banner to the breeze, and with nearly one hundred ministers and over fifteen thousand communicants was growing rapidly in favor with the people.

* Wilson's Life of Bishop White, pp. 23, 24, 25, 26. † See "Broadside:" Fac-similes of Church Documents, D. 27.

The Philadelphia convention was not engaged in *reorganizing* a Church. They laid the foundation principles, adopted lay delegation, determined on a rescension of the Book of Common Prayer, and set forth a system of Church government that differed in as many particulars and in as important points from the government of the Church of England as the Methodist Episcopal Church did. Nothing remained of any form or fabric of Church æuthority in America, except a few church-edifices and the persons who worshipped in them. From the vestryman to the bishop every process of constitution and election was new and hitherto untried. But what right had two clergymen in Philadelphia, or sixteen clergymen and eleven laymen in New York, to call a convention of Episcopalians in any city or at any time? The same right, no more, no less, than that exercised by Dr. Coke, Francis Asbury, Richard Whatcoat, Thomas Vasey, and Freeborn Garrettson to call a special convention of Methodist preachers to organize a Methodist Episcopal Church in America. Not one privilege of birth, station, or ecclesiastical power can be cited in favor of Dr. White and his brethren that does not equally belong to Dr. Coke and his coadjutors. The same Episcopal hands had been laid upon Dr. White and Dr. Coke according to the canons of the Church of England. Dr. White saw fit to call into consultation one section of the Episcopal Church in America to devise means for organization, and Dr. Coke came to assemble another section that had not only been overlooked, but scornfully repudiated by the clerical and High-church faction. Where there are no vested rights, no titles by prescription, is not the territory in the Lord's

vineyard open to any laborer who may seek to cultivate it by his Master's command? The Methodists did not complain of exclusion, but, like true men and true ambassadors of Christ, they proceeded to do at the moment that which seemed best calculated to advance the interests of the kingdom of Christ.

If Dr. White regarded Mr. Whitefield as a traitor to moral obligation because he became an evangelist and carried the gospel to those who had never heard it, there can be no doubt that he regarded Asbury and his preachers as deluded "enthusiasts," whose work would soon come to naught. Opposed as he was to the principal means which the itinerant preachers employed for the conversion of the people, Dr. White could not have labored in the same Church organization with men who esteemed the religion of the Bible as the power of God ruling the heart, the head, and the life. The extreme caution which the Episcopal rector manifested against "animal feelings" would have rendered his presence in a Methodist Church as unwelcome as the freezing blasts from Hudson's Bay, while the warm exhortations and glowing periods of Asbury and Coke would have created consternation among the fashionable "Churchmen" of Philadelphia.

The event was of God, and a hundred years of history records the wisdom of both parties in proceeding independently of each other. There are many persons for whom the ceremonials of Christianity are the only instrumentalities by which their peculiarly endowed temperaments can develop the religious life. It is possible that the worship of God may be as sincere and as fruitful of good, when the forms of a lit-

urgy are employed, as it may be among those who have no taste for the unvarying terms of a prayer-book service. But there are multitudes to whom the grandest declarations of truth are but dead and cheerless words unless they are filled with the power of human sympathy, and convey the warm breathings of the Spirit of God. Pentecost is appreciated in Methodism. It cannot occur in the cathedrals of High-churchmen.

Chapter XI.

Methodists not Members of the Church of England—Dr. Porteus Decides the Question—Dr. Draper Excluded from the Pulpit of London—A Liberal Bishop—Irreconcilable Differences—Wesley and Toplady—Great Elasticity of the Articles—Diversity of Sects under the Commonwealth—Methodist Mission to the Poor—Charles Wesley's Prophecy—A Poet's Fears—Danger of Chaos in Too Much Liberty—Wesley Afraid of Discord—Dr. Hawks and the Methodists—No Secession from the Episcopalians—Methodism First in the Field—Episcopalians Followed—Taxation for Church Purposes—Incorporation of the Episcopal Church in Virginia—Temporary Prosperity—Act Repealed—Adversity follows.

IF it be possible to prove any fact bearing upon the question of membership in the Church of England, we have testimony from one of the first dignitaries of the English Establishment. It is the formal declaration made by Dr. Porteus, Bishop of London, that *a Methodist is not a member of the Church of England*. The case is that of Dr. Draper, an episcopally ordained clergyman, whom the Bishop had expressly prohibited from officiating in his diocese. A friend applied to the Bishop in behalf of Dr. Draper, and the reply is as follows:

“As I understood that Dr. Draper was what you represent him to be, a man of piety and a good preacher, it gave me, I assure you, no small pain to feel myself under the necessity of excluding him from the pulpits of my diocese; but his own conduct rendered it in me an indispensable duty. Instead of confining himself, which, as a minister of the Church of England, he ought to have done, to the celebration of

divine service in places of worship licensed or consecrated by his diocesan and authorized by law, he chose to become the president of a college and preacher in a chapel founded by Lady Huntingdon for the purpose of training up lay preachers for conventicles, licensed as dissenting meeting-houses. Lady Huntingdon, though a pious woman, was unquestionably not a member of the Church of England, but what is strictly and properly so called, a *Methodist*, professing the doctrines of one of the first founders of Methodism—George Whitefield—and educating young men to preach those doctrines without episcopal ordination. There could not, therefore, be a more injudicious and offensive measure, or one more hostile to the Church of England, than to become president of such a college and the preacher in such a chapel founded for such purposes.”*

This is the language of one of the most liberal-minded men that ever occupied a place in the English hierarchy. His parents were natives of Virginia, and he is regarded by many as having been too complaisant to the dissenters from the Established Church.

“What Dr. Draper has done,” he continues, “is moreover directly repugnant to the canons of the Church of England, which prohibit every minister of that Church from preaching in any chapel that is not sanctioned and allowed by the ecclesiastical laws of the realm under very severe penalties; and were I to proceed to extremities, those penalties must be inflicted. But I have taken a milder course. I have only excluded from the parochial churches of my diocese a clergyman who has separated himself for a

* Life of Dr. Porteus, Bishop of London, p. 267

considerable part of the year from the Established Church and set up a Church of his own, neither licensed nor consecrated by his diocesan. I neither blame Dr. Draper nor any other man for following the dictates of his own conscience in matters of religion. I would have every man permitted to worship God without interruption or molestation in the manner he most approves. But then let him be consistent. Let him not halt between two opinions. Let him not vibrate between two modes of worship. Let him not be a Methodist in the morning and a Church of England man in the afternoon. I never can consent that any clergyman in my diocese should so divide himself between sectarism and the Establishment, between the Church of England and the Church of Lady Huntingdon. Let him take his part and adhere to it steadily and uniformly throughout." *

This clergyman was made Bishop of Chester in 1776 and translated, on the death of Bishop Lowth, to the See of London in 1787, a few months after Dr. William White and Dr. Provoost had been ordained bishops at Lambeth. Mr. Wesley was still alive when this prelate entered upon the duties of that diocese to which the American colonies had been attached. That he did not interfere with Mr. Wesley is a singular fact. John Wesley did, beyond a doubt, celebrate divine service in places of worship not "consecrated by his diocesan." Why did Dr. Draper experience the severity of the canon law, while Mr. Wesley escaped?

It is easy enough for those who have been reared under a system of unqualified religious liberty to de-

* Life of Dr. Porteus, Bishop of London, p. 269.

termine the path of duty for others not similarly situated. We can say in a moment that the manifest duty of Mr. Wesley and Dr. Draper was to withdraw from the Established Church. But it so happens that the theology of Lady Huntingdon's Connection exactly agrees with that of the Calvinist section of the Church of England, and Mr. Wesley's doctrines were in the main the doctrines of the Homilies and the Arminian party in the Church. The Bishop of Lincoln wrote a "Refutation of Calvinism," and the excellent Dr. Hodgson, biographer of Bishop Porteus, thought that "the intricate and long agitated question was set at rest forever."* Calvinism may be, as another Church of England writer asserts it to be, "a system consisting of human creatures without liberty, doctrines without sense, faith without reason, and a God without mercy;" but it is essentially the system inculcated in the Thirty-nine Articles. The Arminian sense of Mr. Wesley and the Calvinist sense of Mr. Whitefield or Mr. Toplady are irreconcilably hostile to each other, but both parties claimed to hold the doctrines of the Church.

Why should Dr. Draper leave the Church of England on account of its doctrines if he found his Calvinism taught in them, and saw clergymen like Mr. Berridge and Mr. Romaine in high favor, from whose views he did not vary one iota? And why should John Wesley leave the Church when Archbishop Tillotson and the Bishop of Lincoln, not to mention a score of lesser lights, maintained the Arminian creed in its purity? Who is to decide when these high authorities disagree? Bishop Beveridge for the Calvin-

* Life of Porteus, p. 266, note.

ists, Bishop Porteus for the Arminians, prelate for prelate, scholar for scholar, down to the humblest curate in the kingdom, we can find them drawn up on opposite sides in this great controversy. If Mr. Wesley dissented from the Church doctrine as Mr. Romaine preached it, the Bishop of Lincoln dissented precisely in the same way and to the same extent.

Construing the Articles of Religion as he did, and believing firmly that his construction was the right one, and accorded with the intention and meaning of those who drew them in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, Mr. Wesley was unwilling to proclaim himself a dissenter, because he was not one. He was too well acquainted with the history of the Christian Church to believe that an independent denomination of Christians could be established on the foundation of Church government alone. But above all, he was closely related by natural ties to circumstances that acted as a warning to him. His grandfather, John Wesley, was a minister, and exercised his ministry during that period in which an almost infinite diversity of sects produced endless confusion in England. He knew that sincerity was not enough, that piety could give no security against the follies of ignorance or the ambition of designing men.

When the Episcopal Church was overthrown in England Presbyterianism and Independency divided the territory among themselves. A Connectional system like that of the Presbyterian Church is well adapted to preserve unity of creed and uniformity of discipline. But the Congregational system, whatever may be its excellences in other respects, has no safeguards against the introduction of conflicting creeds and an-

tagonistic doctrines. If every particular Church is sovereign, and no other can exercise any species of authority over it, there can never be any means of protecting the religious world from crude, ill-digested, and unscriptural doctrines. The variety of theories will become formulated into parties and sects, and as long as the simple majority of a congregation supports the pastor in his teaching it is impossible to check or overthrow any extravagant opinion that may arise. Among a people trained to independent thought for centuries, as the American people are, this purely democratic system of government can preserve itself, and may not produce any of the evils indigenous to the system elsewhere. But a careful scrutiny of the case will show that the governing powers among independent Churches are practically the same as in all other forms of Church association. Intelligence will rule, whether in form or in fact, and a few men will devise and plan and direct the great interests of the Church, and give strength, stability, and tone to public opinion.

The want of this intelligent public opinion, the absence of educated masses, and especially among the Methodists, whose special mission was to the poor, caused Mr. Wesley to tremble at the thought of organizing an independent Church. So confident was Mr. Charles Wesley of the fact that neither the Methodists of England nor those of America were capable of self-government that he predicted speedy ruin to follow the organization of the Methodist Church in 1784. "After my brother's death," said Charles Wesley, "what will be their end? They will lose all their influence and importance; they will turn aside to vain

janglings; they will settle again upon their lees; and, like other sects of dissenters, come to nothing."*

We cannot blame him for making this doleful prophecy. The truth is, self-government in political life and self-government in religious life must go hand in hand. An endowed Church, established by the State, cannot exist for any length of time in a free Commonwealth, nor can a self-governing Church prosper in any other than a popular civil government. It has been the wonderful mission of the United States of America to demonstrate that men can govern themselves and maintain a pure Christianity by the power of moral obligations only. Monarchy may be but a name, as it certainly is now in Great Britain, but it was a great deal more than this in the days of Charles Wesley. Neither he nor John had a particle of faith in republican principles. Great men like Alexander Hamilton, and many undoubted patriots, lived and died in doubt of the permanence of the American Union and a free government in the United States.

It is not singular, then, that John Wesley desired his followers to adhere to the Church. In some of his gloomy moments, anticipating his own death, he proposed to make the great controversialist, John Fletcher, his successor. He thought some one controlling mind essential to the order, regularity, and perpetuity of Methodism. Fletcher went to the skies before him, and Wesley was disappointed. But his appeals were vehement for adherence to the Church. He did not see any more disposition than beforetime among Churchmen to help the cause for which he had struggled so long and faithfully, but he saw no pros-

* *Memoirs of Charles Wesley*, p. 423.

pect of deliverance for his people from the agents of discord and disintegration. Indeed, if we pass from Wesley's own thoughts and feelings to the events which followed immediately after his death, we find that these fears and doubts were shared by others. Many thought that the partiality for Dr. Coke would designate him as the leader in those perilous times. It is probable that Dr. Coke shared this opinion, and from some expressions of his it may have taken the form of an expectation. But the British brethren lost no time in correcting these mistakes. The man whom Wesley had ordained a "superintendent" in England was not elected to the presidency of the Conference, and Dr. Coke, who expected the same office,* was content to take the place of secretary of that body. The Irish brethren, whose Conference he had frequently held by Wesley's appointment, had already expressed the same sentiment by choosing one of their own members to preside in the chair of Wesley. The first fortunate, auspicious thing that the Wesleyans did after the death of their founder was to establish the point, once for all, that there was to be no *second* Wesley. It was a similar feeling that prevented Mr. Monroe from receiving a unanimous vote for the Presidency of the United States. One man voted against him because it was desired that no man should be paid the compliment which Washington alone had received and deserved. John Wesley was the Aaron of a religious dispensation, and upon him, by the appointment of Divine Providence, there was placed a burden which no man can envy except the one who knows nothing of its character.

* Letter to Bishop Seabury.

John Wesley was too well acquainted with the awful responsibilities connected with power over our fellow-men to covet it. He tells us that it was thrust upon him, and he was compelled to exercise it or prove recreant to his duty to God and man. "The power I have," he says in a letter to the Rev. Mr. Venn in 1765, "I never sought. It was the undesired, unexpected result of the work God was pleased to work by me. I have a thousand times sought to devolve it on others, but as yet I cannot. I therefore suffer it till I can find any to ease me of my burden."* This power was never given to him by a vote of any assembly, and no association of men could confer the same authority upon any man. Wesley was *sui generis*, a man who stood alone in his age and country, and he was, like his great countryman, the poet of humanity, "not for an age, but for all time."

But the action of the Wesleyans had a precedent on this side of the ocean, when the Conference of 1787 "left Mr. Wesley's name off the minutes." A promise of a previous Conference had been misinterpreted. After the organization of 1784, Methodism in America was a *Church* and no longer a *Society*. Willing to listen to his advice first among the sons of men, they were still in the attitude of independent responsibility, and could not yield their convictions nor shape their judgments to the will of a man three thousand miles away. No matter if he had been every thing below an inspired apostle, the right of self-government is inseparable from the franchises of a free Church.

Returning to the relations existing between the

* Works, vol. xiii., p. 239.

Methodists of Virginia and the Episcopalians in 1784, we find Dr. Hawks attributing, in great measure, the overthrow of the Episcopal Church to what he calls the "secession of the Methodists." The chapter of history which records "the incorporation of the Episcopal Church in Virginia" in 1784 will reward the patient inquirer who investigates it. Dr. Hawks presents the principal facts, and his pages will furnish our materials. The Legislature had *disestablished* the Episcopal Church. It had gone farther, and proclaimed absolute equality of all creeds and religions. All denominations of Christians were on an equal footing, and no tax nor tithing system was to be established for any nor for all. Every measure looking to these ends received a decided negative. But there was not wanting among the Episcopal advocates some of the traditional wisdom of the serpent, and it came forward accompanied by an apparent spirit of harmlessness, reminding us of the dove.

"A resolution was reported by the chairman of a committee of the whole house on the state of the Commonwealth," says Dr. Hawks, "that in the opinion of the committee acts ought to pass for the incorporation of all societies of the Christian religion which may apply for the same; and the resolution was adopted by a majority of nearly one-third of the whole house. Here again Mr. Henry gave to the measure his powerful support; and we learn from his accomplished biographer that his votes on these two measures formed the foundation of a charge against Mr. Henry of advocating the reestablishment of the Protestant Episcopal Church." *

* Protestant Episcopal Church in Virginia, p. 159.

The other measure, alluded to as one of the two which formed a charge against Mr. Henry, was the proposition to tax all persons for the benefit of those Churches for which the tax-payer might choose to designate his contribution; and if sums were collected for which there was no special designation, they should be applied to educational purposes. But this measure failed, while the other became a law. No sooner was this bill passed, however, than the public awoke to the fact that the Legislature had passed a law to endow the Episcopal Church, which was yet to be, with all the property that had formerly been devoted to Church purposes. There was no such organization known in law or history at this time as the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States, and therefore, if such a Church was to be incorporated, it would exist in Virginia alone. The act of incorporation states that this Church, "by the name, style, and title aforesaid, they and their successors, shall forever lawfully have, hold, use, and enjoy all and every tract or tracts of glebeland already purchased, the churches and chapels already built, with the burying-grounds belonging to them, and such as were contracted for before the first day of January, in the year 1777, for the use of the parishes, with their hereditaments and appurtenances, and all books, plate, and ornaments appropriated to the use of, and every other thing the property of, the late Established Church, to the sole and only proper use and benefit of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the parish where the respective ministers and vestries reside,"* etc. This act made the Church a corporate body, capable of suing and being sued, and au-

*Journals of the Conventions of the P. E. Church in Virginia, p. 1.

thorized suits for recovery of all their estates, and was, in effect, a reëstablishment of the Church in the place of a favored and privileged denomination.

"Its passage was hailed with thankfulness," says Dr. Hawks, "and a day of brightness seemed about to dawn upon the temporal interests of the Church. But contemporaneously with the circumstance just related an incident occurred which was afterward to aid in dissipating the short-lived joy which the incorporation of the Church had occasioned. Up to this time the Methodists had continued in alliance with the Church, and professed to consider themselves as a part of it; but the time had now come for their final separation from it."*

The facts are sadly contradictory to some of the statements of the historian. The "incident" to which he alludes was the organization of the Methodist Episcopal Church in December, 1784. This event occurred a few weeks after the passage of the act of incorporation; and on the 18th of May, 1785, the first convention of the clergy and laity in Virginia was held in the city of Richmond. Nearly five months after the organization of the Methodist Church we find the largest assembly of Episcopalians that ever met together in Virginia—clergymen and laymen—conferring about religious affairs in their State. Do they raise the cry of "danger to the Church" from the secession of the Methodists? Do they pass a resolution, or propose one, lamenting the departure of four thousand communicants in a body from their Church? Do they condescend to notice the matter at all, in any shape, manner, or form? In vain do we

* Protestant Episcopal Church in Virginia, p. 165.

look through the printed journals to find the slightest allusion to such a disaster as the retirement of the whole Methodist body from the care of "the Church." Alas! no. There are more Episcopal clergymen at this convention than will appear again on its muster-roll in fifty years. There are thirty-six clergymen, and among them the Rev. Devereaux Jarratt, the "some of the clergy," and the sole Episcopal entity with which Methodism had been in alliance since its introduction into Virginia.

If the reason for this wonderful rally of the Episcopal forces is sought, Dr. Hawks will give it. Speaking of the act of incorporation, he says: "A pastor, conscientiously disposed to discharge his duty, might live happily and comfortably under such a law, and we hear no complaints made by the clergy of that day against its provisions."* This was undoubtedly true; and it is none the less true that, whether a pastor was "conscientiously disposed to discharge his duty," or whether he was otherwise minded, there was a security for a maintenance to which many of them had no moral claim. "After the fall of the Establishment," says Dr. White, "a considerable proportion of the clergy continued to enjoy the glebes—the law considering them as freeholds during life—*without performing a single act of sacred duty*, except, perhaps, that of marriage. They knew that their services would not have been attended."†

We are not now at a loss to explain the large attendance of clergymen at the convention of 1785. It certainly was not to lament the defection of the Meth-

* Protestant Episcopal Church in Virginia, p. 165. † *Memoirs of the Church*, p. 82.

odists, nor to solicit their return to the bosom of "the Church." The clergy were aware of the immense superiority that had been given them by the act of incorporation. They were in a joyful mood, notwithstanding Asbury and the itinerant preachers had carried off several thousands of souls from their watch-care into the wilds of "fanaticism" and "enthusiasm." Indeed, they were so jubilant over the resuscitation of "the Church," and so utterly indifferent to the movements of the Methodists, that they pointedly and repeatedly gave their clerical brother, Mr. Jarratt, to understand that he was no welcome visitor to their convention. He felt the slight, and touched the cold shoulder a few times, and then quietly mounted his horse and rode home after a few hours' stay in Richmond.

One whole week this convention was in session, and among other notable things done was the adoption of an address to the people of the State who adhered to the Episcopal Church. An excellent address it is, but not a syllable is to be found there which indicates the loss of four thousand Episcopal communicants by the secession of the Methodists. The Church had lost every thing but the glebes and the affections of the people, says the address; and the exhortation to the lay brethren is pointed and eloquent. "By the favor of Providence, indeed," says the address, "the Protestant Episcopal Church is incorporated by law, and under this sanction are we now assembled."

Before twelve months had elapsed "an incident occurred which was afterward to aid in dissipating the short-lived joy" of the clergy. The incident was the excitement that was growing daily more manifest

among the masses of the people, and it was exhibiting itself in petitions for the repeal of the act of incorporation whereby the Episcopal Church was placed above the conditions which surrounded other denominations. The evidences of the unpopularity of the measure began to multiply so rapidly that the politicians took alarm. No matter who did this, whether it was the Baptists, the implacable enemies of episcopacy, or the Presbyterians or the newly organized Methodist Church, or all of these, together with the ungodly men who wished the destruction of all the Churches. The fact is plain enough, and it is evidenced by the attendance of only seventeen clergymen at the convention of 1786. The Legislature, in the fall of that year, repealed the act of incorporation; and at the convention of 1787 only fifteen clergymen appeared in answer to their names. If a quorum had been recognized, no business could have been transacted. Now, it surely was not the defection of the Methodists which failed to affect the convention the year after it occurred, and three years after produced so great a falling off.

Chapter XII.

Efforts of the Methodist Preachers to Reconcile the People to the Episcopal Ministers—Failure—Rev. Thomas Ware—Account of a Scene in Delaware—Methodists Denounced by a Clergyman—Scene in a Church—A Happy Woman—"Bless the Lord for this Kind of Enthusiasm"—A Disappointed Rector—Secret of Methodist Success—Heart-preaching Reaching the Heart—Mr. Jarratt the Only Preacher of Instantaneous Conversion and Heart-religion—His Success—Bishop Watson on the Influence of the Holy Spirit—Dangerous Doctrine—Approach to Deism—Proofs of Moral Reformation—Dr. White Accuses Wesley of "Enthusiasm"—No Divine Call to the Ministry—Simply a Profession—White on Inspiration—Only Two Passages in the New Testament—A Barren Faith—Colton on Proselytism—The Bishop of Oxford—Restless Waters "Emigrating" Toward the Church—Proofs—Statistics of Massachusetts and Connecticut.

THAT the early Methodist preachers did every thing in their power to bring the Episcopal clergy into coöperation with them has been clearly shown. At almost every Conference from 1773 to 1784, a pointed exhortation was sent forth to the people—an exhortation which every man was expected to enforce by precept and example. In various forms it emphasized adherence to the Church and attendance upon the sacraments administered by Episcopal hands. But how was this patience and loyalty to the "old Church" rewarded? By insult, ridicule, and misrepresentation. We have already seen that there was but one clergyman who gave any assistance or encouragement to Asbury and his company of itinerants. No opportunity was lost on the part of the "clergy" to

bring these men into derision and contempt among the people.

The proofs of this statement are abundant. From one who was an eye-witness to the facts related the following characteristic narrative is taken. The Rev. Thomas Ware was present at the Conference held in Baltimore in the spring of 1784. He began his itinerant career at that time, and it was in the fall of the year—in the month of September—that the scene occurred to which the reader's attention is directed. No intelligence had been received from Mr. Wesley. No one could tell what his decision would be in regard to the administration of the sacraments. Whether the establishment of the independence of the United States would effect any change in the relation of the Societies to their brethren in England could only be a subject of conjecture. There were, doubtless, some persons who anticipated a radical change, but precisely what it was to be no man could foretell. The hand of Providence was guiding both sections of Methodism through dark and intricate paths into the sunlight of peace and prosperity. While this state of suspense lasted, Mr. Ware gives us a specimen of the animus of "the clergy" toward the Methodists and their work:

"In September of this year (1784) I was at the house of a member of the Protestant Episcopal Church whose wife was a Methodist. In conversation with him, he remarked that he had some hope of seeing the old Church resuscitated. 'The people,' said he, 'are gathering about our long-forsaken Church. A clergyman direct from England is to preach a trial sermon, and will probably be settled among us. Come,

will you go to hear him? He is said to be very learned.' I told him I had come to spend the day with him, and should be pleased to go and hear the stranger. I accordingly went, and for the first time heard the divine, exclusive, and unchangeable right of prelacy preached up, but not, as I thought, very skillfully. The parable of the good Samaritan was the theme of the discussion. The preacher made the man who fell among thieves to mean Adam; the good Samaritan, Christ; the inn, the Church, into which bleeding humanity was brought to be bound up and healed; and the two pence given to the host, the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper."

"'But who,' said the preacher, 'is the host, the keeper of the inn, to whom the two pence were given? This is the main thing to which our attention is called.' Here, he added, he hesitated not to say, fearless of successful contradiction, that the apostles were the prelates of the primitive Church, and that diocesan bishops were their successors; that to them appertained the exclusive right of ordination, confirmation, and government; and that this order was unchangeable, having for its author and foundation Christ and his apostles. 'These things,' said he, 'being unquestionably true, having the seal of the Church whose infallibility is tested by Christ when he says, "The gates of hell shall not prevail against it," it follows, of course, that fallen humanity has never been by Heaven intrusted to any claiming to be clergymen who cannot trace their ministerial succession from the apostles.'

"These assumptions he endeavored to support by quoting some authorities and pouring out a flood of

invective upon enthusiasm. 'It was,' he said, 'under the magic influence of enthusiasm that some men of distinction in the Church had given up diocesan episcopacy as apostolic,' and he admitted that the infatuation had at times become *general* though not *universal*. 'For, had it been so,' said he, 'the gates of hell would have prevailed, the declaration of Christ to the contrary notwithstanding. John Wesley,' he continued, 'was the prince of enthusiasts. He with his babblers, as Rowland Hill calls them, has filled England with enthusiasts. And mark! No stream can rise higher than its source; consequently, the preaching of the Methodists can only kindle an enthusiastic flame—a mere *ignis fatuus*—in any one.' As he thus expressed himself, a very interesting, pious female cried out: 'Glory to God! if what I now feel be enthusiasm, let me always be an enthusiast!'

"This was a quietus, and threw the clergyman into serious embarrassment, as it was too evident not to be perceived by all that this rebuke from a lady highly esteemed for her accomplishments and piety was approved by the congregation generally as justly merited. But he had gone too far to retreat, or even to make an apology; and if he had been disposed to do the one or the other, there was still a serious difficulty—it was not *written*. So he hesitated before entering upon his third head, which was to note the literal meaning of the two pence mentioned in the text; but he ventured to proceed, and said this, in his opinion, referred to the support of the clergy, which he did think was more in accordance with the order of God in England than in America. At this allusion his audience evidently manifested much dissatisfaction.

They were not in a state of mind, at that juncture, to bear such comparisons between the institutions of the two countries. The union of Church and State, which was evidently implied in the allusion, had no advocates in this country except among the disaffected; and especially not here, as the people were imbued with the principles of the Revolution. He could, therefore, hardly have uttered any thing more offensive to their feelings.

“After the sermon was over a conference was held with the preacher, which soon terminated. Of what transpired I was informed by one of the officers of the Church, with whom I was acquainted. In narrating the facts he said: ‘Having been a vestryman, it fell on me to open the business. This I did by informing his reverence that I feared we should not be able to give him a very liberal call; that the Methodists were numerous and the preachers generally acceptable, so that, if they had been in orders, there would hardly have been a serious Churchman left. He was then requested to name the sum we must pay in order to secure his services, which he did. He was informed, however, that so large an amount could not be raised; but, as he was single, and his perquisites would be considerable, and as he had said we were perishing for lack of knowledge, we expressed a hope that he would think of the case, and lay on us as light a burden as possible.’ The gentleman then stated that fifty dollars a year was all he was willing to pay for the support of the gospel—twenty-five to the Methodists and twenty-five to the Church—and added, addressing himself to the minister: ‘But for one, sir, I must tell you my mind freely I

do not much admire your preaching nor your spirit. My wife is a Methodist, and she is no more an enthusiast than your reverence. Such preaching, sir, will drive the people from the Church.' At this the preacher appeared agitated, and remarked: 'I did say many Churchmen in America, I feared, were perishing for lack of knowledge, and here we have an evidence of the truth of it. Here is a vestryman who places Methodist preachers, the propagators of enthusiasm, on an equality with the divinely authorized clergy of the Church of England. From him I will receive nothing.' 'Pray, sir,' said another gentleman interrupting him, 'we cannot divorce our wives and turn our daughters out-of-doors because they have joined the Methodists. There are but two clergymen on this whole peninsula, and one of these is a drunkard. I have been a Church-warden in another State, and have often said I would never leave the Church, but I had much rather hear a Methodist preach than a drunken Churchman.' 'Pardon me, sir,' said the parson; 'do you think I am a drunkard? I perceive you mean to insult me. But we will make the matter short. I have told you for what I would serve you, and I now say plainly that you may perish for all me before I will serve you for any thing less.' On hearing this they all silently retired, leaving the priest intoxicated with passion, as some thought, if nothing else." *

This incident reveals the secret of Episcopal failure and of Methodist success in the early days of the republic. The people were sufficiently intelligent to choose their own Church relations, and they chose

* Memoir of Rev. Thos. Ware, pp. 88-93.

them in the fear of God. Names were nothing; antiquities were nothing. No cathedrals supported by the tax-payers of the country dazzled the eyes or charmed the senses of the plain, unpretending republicans of America. When awakened by the Spirit of God, they desired to be saved from the wrath to come, and they fled to Christ as a sure and present refuge for the sinner. They found the pearl of great price, and rejoiced exceedingly in their heavenly riches. The Methodist preachers taught a free salvation. No arbitrary decrees of God beclouded his mercy or rendered his goodness questionable. They taught a *present* salvation. There was no need to wait a day nor an hour; not one moment—"To-day is the day of salvation;" "Now is the accepted time." They taught a salvation that could be *felt* and *known*. It was not a misty, doubtful, halting, half-hearted hope. It was a firm, true, strong, *divine* persuasion that "Jesus died for *me*," and that "by faith in him *I* am saved now."

The Episcopal clergymen, always excepting Mr. Jarratt, did not preach after this fashion. They were very much afraid of "excitements," of "animal feelings," of "fanaticism," and of "enthusiasm." They seldom missed an opportunity to caution their people against the "extravagances" of the Methodists. Until the advent of the Episcopal revivalist—Bishop Moore, of Virginia—the churches of the Episcopal denomination were strangers to any scenes akin to the "revival meetings" of the Methodists. Nor is this surprising. The most distinguished men on the Episcopal bench in England gave forth uncertain sounds upon the gospel-trumpet. To take only one

example, let the case of Richard Watson, Bishop of Landaff, suffice to illustrate the "conservatism" of the *moderate* Churchmen of that day. Bishop Watson, in his reply to Gibbon, rendered a service to Christianity which was surpassed only by his reply to Thomas Paine. The "Apology for the Bible" is still a text-book for young ministers, and richly deserves its popularity. But the tenderness which he exhibited toward the author of the "Decline and Fall" has raised a doubt of his earnestness if not of his sincerity. It is doing him a wrong to charge him with disaffection to the cause which he advocated with so much gracefulness of style and wealth of learning. Nevertheless, if we are to judge his religious experience by his opinions expressed late in life, there is no longer any mystery concerning his want of animation and self-respect in his dealings with the great historian. Bishop Watson was not an unbeliever, like Gibbon, but of how much value was that religion which he describes in the tract which was sold in editions of ten thousand copies? Who can read these words without a feeling of painful surprise?

"The Holy Spirit, we *know*, gave his assistance in an extraordinary manner to the first preachers of the gospel, and they were sure of his *dwelling in them* by the power of speaking with new tongues, and by the other gifts which he distributed to them. We *think* we have the authority of Scripture for saying that God still continues to *work in us both to will and to do of his good pleasure*; to give his *Holy Spirit to them that ask him*; but the manner in which the Holy Spirit gives his assistance to faithful and pious persons is not attended with any certain signs of its be-

ing given. It is secret and unknown. You cannot distinguish the working by which he *helpeth your infirmities* from the ordinary operations of your own minds."*

There is nothing in Gibbon's "Decline and Fall" as destructive to the Christian Church and to Christianity as these words of a professed minister of the gospel. If we *cannot* distinguish between the working of the Holy Spirit and the ordinary operations of our own minds, then the religion of Christ is of no more value to the world than the vagaries of Buddha or the speculations of Mohammed. Bishop Horsley, and others, pointed out the radical errors in this tract, but Bishop Watson defended his position, and permitted these melancholy words to go upon record only a short time before his death:

"I am not ashamed to own that I give a greater degree of assent to the doctrine of the extraordinary operation of the Spirit in the age of the apostles than I do to that of his immediate influence, either by illumination or sanctification, in succeeding ages. Notwithstanding this confession, I am not prepared to say that the latter is an unscriptural doctrine. Future investigation may clear up this point; and God, I trust, will pardon me an indecision of judgment proceeding from an inability of comprehension. If it shall ever be shown that the doctrine of the ordinary operation of the Holy Ghost is not a Scripture doctrine, Methodism, Quakerism, and every degree of enthusiasm, will be radically extinguished in the Christian Church. Men, no longer believing that God does that by more means which may be done by fewer, will

*Anecdotes of the Life of Bishop Watson, p. 195.

wholly rely for religious *instruction*, consequent *conversion*, and subsequent *salvation* on his word." *

This extraordinary passage reveals a state of mind that can scarcely be distinguished from that of the deist. If the preaching of the gospel is a purely intellectual exercise, and religious instruction results in *conversion*, precisely as any resolution may be formed for the abandonment of an evil habit, by the operation of the human will, unaided by the Holy Spirit, what then is the subsequent "salvation?" From what is a man saved, and by what? From sin by his fellow-sinner, or by the operations of his own mind? This cheerless creed exceeds the most extravagant hypothesis that has ever been branded with the name of Pelagianism. The Church is a school of morality in which nothing but the power of the human intellect is to be sought or found!

Is it remarkable that such "instruction" as that did not satisfy the souls of honest Churchmen in those periods that have been called "great awakenings?" Is it astonishing that sinners pierced to the heart by the arrows of conviction should seek the men who pointed them to the "Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world?" If Bishop Watson doubted whether there was any *divine* power in the gospel, any influence of the Holy Ghost in the Church, there were scores and hundreds and thousands, and not a few of as great men as he, who could testify, and did testify, to the world that the Holy Spirit had arrested them as sinners, had turned their night into day, and had given them the comforts of a high, holy, and precious hope of eternal life in Christ Jesus. There

*Anecdotes of the Life of Bishop Watson, pp. 195, 196.

were instances of conversion as wonderful as that of Saul. There were gifts of God's Spirit as remarkable as the gift of tongues, and there were as certain proofs of God's presence among his people as there were on the day of Pentecost in Jerusalem.

Notwithstanding a thousand proofs of moral reformation that followed the preaching of the Methodists, the leaders in the Protestant Episcopal Church did not fail to discourage and discountenance the work of these men of God. That Dr. White held the view of the operations of the Holy Spirit entertained by Bishop Watson is capable of the clearest evidence. Holding these views, what fellowship could there be between those who believe that the Holy Spirit is the Divine Comforter, the unerring Guide into all truth, and those who deny any divine influence upon the soul that can be distinguished from the action of human reason?

The conduct of Dr. White is aggravated by the supercilious style in which he refers to Mr. Wesley and his followers: "In the lives of Mr. John Wesley and Mr. George Whitefield you may perceive much of their conduct and of their preaching to have been the result of impressions which they acknowledged with grief in the later period of their lives."* Would it not appear to be in accordance with the principles of Christian truthfulness if the preaching which was "the result of impressions" — whatever that may mean — should be pointed out in the works of Mr. Wesley? Is it honest and upright conduct in a minister of the gospel to assert that "much of the conduct and of the preaching" of Mr. Wesley "was acknowledged with grief"

* Life of Bishop White, p. 112.

in his later years, without furnishing one scintilla of evidence from Mr. Wesley himself either to prove the commission of the error or his subsequent sorrow and grief on account of it? On what page of his works, in what letter to a friend, in what authentic writing, is it recorded by Mr. Wesley that he repented the conduct and preaching which were the results of "impressions?"

Dr. White, in striving to prove that there is no divine call to the ministry, says: "Both of these men confided in an inward call to preach doctrines directly opposed to those taught by the people called Quakers, and yet how many of these latter carry on their work on *the same persuasion of immediate illumination*. It is not intended to speak of either of these descriptions of people with disrespect or with doubt of their sincerity. But what a strange representation do they conjointly give of the Divine Being, as if his inspiration were the source of opposite persuasions respectively possessing them! that there rested on them the duty of traversing countries with conflicting declarations of his will!"*

"It is not intended to speak with disrespect" of the "description of people" to which Dr. White belonged, but it is greatly to be lamented that a man of his position in the Church should hazard a statement which must be attributed either to malice or to ignorance. If he had read Mr. Wesley's writings—even the sadly marred and imperfect edition before the public in their author's life-time—Dr. White must have known that neither Mr. Wesley nor any trusted follower of his ever laid any the most remote, claim to the spe-

* Life of Bishop White, p. 413.

cies of "inspiration" here attributed to the Quakers. If Dr. White's theology had been as far removed from deism as Mr. Wesley's was from the vagaries of "illuminated" enthusiasts, the struggle for life of the Protestant Episcopal Church in America would have been less protracted and uncertain. No duty of "traversing countries" possessed the consciences of the clergymen of Dr. White's communion. They had no "signs following" their ministry, and the reason is unfolded in the language of the Philadelphia patriarch:

"I will briefly state what I take to be the scriptural doctrine of inspiration, although it will be only a repetition of what I gave in a former correspondence. Our Saviour, before he left the world, gave to his disciples the promise of an extraordinary agent, who should guide them into all truth and bring all things to remembrance, and, further, should endow them with power from on high. That the inspirations of this agent thus promised are not the same as the teachings of a monitor alleged to be within all men is evident from there being the precise date of the commencement of the former and from the ceasing of their attendant powers after the apostolic age. On there being put out of view all the passages of Scripture appropriate to this subject, *you will find none from which we are warranted to affirm the influences of the Holy Spirit in ourselves* other than such as appear in Galatians v. 21 and Ephesians v. 9."*

The "doctrine of inspiration"—that is to say, the doctrine of a divine influence guiding the pen of the writer or the tongue of the speaker, so that both of

* Life of Bishop White, p. 413.

these persons are infallibly secured against any error in the matter of their teaching—is one thing, and the influence of the Holy Spirit in convicting, converting, and sanctifying the human soul is quite another thing. If Dr. White supposed that Mr. Wesley claimed the “inspiration” of the apostolic age, it was owing to Dr. White’s ignorance of Mr. Wesley and of his writings. Else it is a case of grave, deliberate misrepresentation. Mr. Wesley taught, and his followers at this day teach, that whatever was necessary in the agency of the Spirit to the conversion of a soul in the days of the apostles is necessary in this age, for human nature is unchanged. Mr. Wesley taught, and Methodists teach to-day, that the first step of a penitent sinner toward the kingdom of heaven is preceded by the work of the Holy Spirit upon his heart in convicting, enlightening grace. Mr. Wesley taught, and we teach, that the plan of salvation is the same to-day that it was when the evangelist wrote these memorable words: “He came unto his own, and his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name; which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.” (John i. 11-13.) Mr. Wesley taught that the words of St. Paul to the Romans are the property of men and women in this age, and will continue to be a precious word of promise until the end of time: “For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God; and if children, then heirs;

heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together." (Rom. viii. 15-17.)

Dr. White knew of only two passages in the New Testament applicable to ourselves—only two passages in which "we are warranted to affirm the influences of the Holy Spirit in ourselves." These are Galatians v. 22: "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith." Here, in the midst of a sentence, he stops. Why "meekness and temperance" are excluded from Dr. White's catalogue we are not informed. The other passage is Ephesians v. 9: "For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth." If we are to treat Dr. White's assertion in the light of serious argument, the question arises at once, If these virtues in the Christian soul are the fruits of the Spirit—that is to say, the *effects* of which the Holy Spirit is the cause—is it possible that an intelligent, reasonable being can have the knowledge of an effect without experience of the cause? If the Spirit of God works in us to will and to do of his good pleasure, is it impossible for us to know that the Holy Spirit is thus at work in our hearts? "He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself." (1 John v. 10.) What witness is this? Of our own spirit? Then the declaration of Paul supplements that with the assertion which is as strong as the throne of the Eternal: "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit."

Only two passages "from which we are warranted to affirm the influences of the Holy Spirit in ourselves!" Alas! if these be all that have descended through the "apostolical succession" to the clergy-

men of Dr. White's school, we can understand some statements which are otherwise but dubiously explained. "The religious culture of the people of the United States hitherto," says the Rev. Calvin Colton in the "Genius and Mission of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States," "has been chiefly done by other hands than those of the American Episcopal Church, and it would be equally in derogation of fact and justice not to admit that this culture has been of great value and importance. What would the United States have been at this moment without it? But a small remove from heathenism. In the present defective mode of Church education—pity it is so—one may be born in the Church and grow up in it without knowing why he is a Churchman. But he who comes from without comes for reasons which he understands and which he will never forget. He feels an interest in the study of the subject, and is sure to continue it."* This refreshingly candid and genial writer tells us that "by much the largest part of the additions to the Episcopal Church" comes by proselytism from other Churches. "And they constitute some of the best members of the Church," he says, "because they never come without having considered the subject and learned the reasons." Therefore, as he interprets Providence, "we shall yet have occasion to see that one of the grand providential purposes of the mission of the American Episcopal Church is to gather in and absorb the religious elements already furnished to her hand!" The more good these "denominations" do, the ingenuous writer tells us, "so much greater are the chances of the

* *Genius of the Church*, pp. 273, 274.

American Episcopal Church. They are furnishing materials everywhere for her to build up with!"

So, it appears, having banished the doctrine of the regenerating influence of the Holy Spirit from her pulpits and given it over to "the sects," the legatee of "apostolical" powers must depend upon other Churches to supply herself with members. A barren Church, that cannot bring forth sons and daughters to the Lord of hosts, must needs glory in the fact that she can pick up here and there a few waifs and strays from other fields! So far from imitating the apostle Paul, who was careful to avoid building on "another man's foundation," "this description of people" rejoices in becoming a refuge for all the malcontents in Christendom.

In that singular work which the author has been pleased to call a "History of the Protestant Episcopal Church in America," the Bishop of Oxford, thankful for any favor, takes the gossip of somebody's "Letters from America" as authority for some very extraordinary statements. "Nowhere have the restless waters of the multitude of sects tossed themselves in wilder madness than in the New World," says Bishop Wilberforce. He sees a tremendous movement setting in, and the ark of the Church rides triumphantly upon the waves. With a proclivity for mixed metaphors that sets criticism at defiance, he says: "So far, indeed, does this migration prevail that no fewer than one-half of the existing clergy, and even of the bishops themselves, have been won over from the sects. And this process seems still to be extending. At Boston there is now a striking revulsion of feeling toward the Church, of whose exclusively apos-

tolical constitution many of the ministers amongst the sects are now convinced. Their present position seems to be one which honest men cannot long consent to occupy. They admit the doctrine of the visible Church and the apostolical succession, and consequently the schism of which the original founders of their sect were guilty, but claim prescription as effacing the flaw in the original deed."*

Nearly forty years have passed away since the Bishop of Oxford wrote these words of exhortation for the benefit of the convicted but not yet converted ministers of Boston. The Episcopal Church has been represented there by some of her most gifted men; but they have not been able to subdue the multitudes, nor have the people shown a disposition to accord an "exclusively apostolical constitution" to the Episcopal denomination. In 1882 the Episcopalians had twenty-one churches and a little more than five thousand four hundred communicants in the city of Boston. The Methodist Episcopal Church had twenty-three churches and over five thousand seven hundred communicants in the same city. In the State of Massachusetts, in 1882, the Protestant Episcopal Church reports eighteen thousand and seventy-six communicants, while the Methodist Episcopal Church shows her number of communicants in excess of thirty-eight thousand. In a population exceeding one million eight hundred thousand, the Episcopalians are represented by one person out of twenty-five in the State and the Methodists by one in twelve, if we estimate three friends of the Church for every person who is

* History of the Protestant Episcopal Church in America, by the Bishop of Oxford, p. 407.

an actual communicant. It is not, then, to the figures of the census that we can turn to prove the triumphant march of apostolical succession in Boston and the State of Massachusetts.

The clerical historian is sadly betrayed by other untrustworthy statements, gathered from sources which he has not recorded. He says: "In Connecticut her roots took a deeper hold in the soil from the action of the storms amongst which she had grown up. In no part of America was her communion so pure and apostolical as here. Her clergy were for the most part natives—men of earnest piety, of settled character, and well established in Church principles—and so greatly did she flourish that at the outbreak of the troubles which ended in the separation of the colonies and mother country, there was every reason for believing that another term of twenty years' prosperity such as she had last enjoyed would have brought full half of the population of the State within her bosom."*

This statement is in absolute contradiction to the testimony of Dr. White and the biographer of Bishop Griswold. It was doubtless true that the personal characters of the clergy were more "respectable," to use Dr. White's term, than those of the "Established" clergy in Maryland and Virginia. The influence of a Puritan community, and the wholesome watchfulness of other denominations, made this essential to the existence of the Episcopal society. But it is absurd to say that the Church was in a prosperous condition when there was not a self-supporting parish in the colony. If the voluntary plan could not be relied

* History of the Protestant Episcopal Church in America, p. 126.

upon, the colonial tax-receiver appropriated the Church-tax paid by Episcopalians to their own pastors. Therefore, if in no instance this tax amounted to a sum sufficient to support a parish minister, the poverty of the people or the fewness of their number must explain the deficiency. The Episcopal Church in this country has always represented an undue proportion of the wealth of the people. "It is the religion of the affluent and the respectable; but by it, as yet, the gospel is not largely preached to the poor." These are the words of Bishop Wilberforce, and they are still words of reproof applicable to this Church in America. If there was not one self-supporting parish in Connecticut, how small was the probability of gaining half of the State in twenty years!

The Bishop has unearthed a "contemporary writer" who attempts to form a list of the denominations in Connecticut at the beginning of the war. Out of two hundred and ninety-one "sectarian congregations" the Episcopalians have seventy-three. Ten years later Dr. Seabury estimated them at only forty congregations of one thousand each, or forty thousand population. This was either a great exaggeration or the Episcopal Church has failed to keep pace with the growth of the population in Connecticut. The population in 1785 did not exceed two hundred thousand; in 1880 it was six hundred and twenty-two thousand. If there were forty thousand Episcopalians in a population of two hundred thousand, there was, or ought to have been, a communion list of not less than ten thousand, or one-fourth of the whole number friendly to the Church. An increase of more than two hundred per cent. would bring the number of communi-

cants in 1882 to more than thirty-two thousand, while the Journal reports only twenty thousand nine hundred and fifty-three in that year. From every point of view, then, we have sought and have nowhere found a plea for boasting. The truth stands beyond the reach of successful challenge that the development and prosperity of the Episcopal Church in America have always been in proportion to the degree in which her pulpits approximate to the soul-cheering gospel proclaimed by "the people called Methodists."

Chapter XIII.

Dr. Seabury's Career—Divisions and Troubles—Open War Probable—Resolution of New York Diocese against Dr. Seabury—What was his Status?—Bishop White's Tactics—Senior Bishop—Irreverent Illustration—Objections to his Ordination—"I am the Church"—Seabury and the Methodists—Ignorance of Methodism—Ordination of White and Provoost—Articles of Religion—Three Bishops Necessary to Ordain a Bishop—Two Conventions—Proposed Union—Expenses of Ordination in England—Three Bishops in America: Seabury, White, and Provoost—Irregular Succession—Meeting of the Scotch and English Lines—Seabury's Ordination could not be Recognized at Canterbury—Fear of Offending the English Bishops—Shrewd Plans—Seabury the Unnecessary Man in an Ordination—His "Succession" Lost—"Samuel Connecticut" has his Coal Quenched—Dr. Seabury in 1789 receiving Half-pay as a Chaplain in a Tory Regiment.

THE career of Dr. Seabury forms one of the most difficult problems in the history of the Protestant Episcopal Church. That he brought into the councils of the Episcopal denomination a most delicate and dangerous question is admitted by all parties. As an American citizen, born in the colonies, his *political* opinions were offensive to the great majority of his countrymen. Yet no one is disposed to censure him for his royalist politics. It was quite natural for a man supported by the British purse to take the British side in the quarrel. This fact alone would not have subjected him to material injury if, by reason of his attachment to the English Liturgy, he had not been compelled to take the side of the King in every public service he held. Dr. White and his colleagues

in Philadelphia on the 4th of July, 1776, resolved to omit the prayer for the King. This was the test of American loyalty, of loyalty to republican principles.

But the amazing fact in the life of Dr. Seabury is that he, a Tory, should presume to solicit from a foreign power spiritual jurisdiction over American republicans. If he had done this openly, if he had called a public meeting or convention of the Episcopal Churches, as Dr. White afterward did, it was open to the people of the Episcopal faith in Connecticut to select him as their bishop if they were so disposed. But there was no such convention, no such election. Ten royalists (some of them about to fly from the country whose cause they had antagonized) met in a secret conclave and concocted a plan whereby a notorious partisan, an enemy to American independence, was to be advanced to the chief place in the Church. This conduct admits of no defense. It was not a whit more honorable than the secret career of Talbot and Welton with their non-juring "orders." "The wretched maxims of that abandoned set of men,"* the Non-jurors, are forgotten, and, failing to entrap the English hierarchy, the persistent candidate turns to the Scotch schismatics, and from them, in a private dwelling-house, in violation of the civil law of the land, receives a gift which was not in the possession of the giver. What right had the "Primus" of the Scotch Non-jurors to make a bishop for a Church in America? No more than Mr. Gladstone has to make a President of the United States. If the absurdities of "apostolical succession" required somebody to do this, so much the worse for the miscalled "succession." If the Epis-

* Wilberforce: History of the Protestant Episcopal Church, p. 117.

copalians of America chose to enslave themselves to an absurdity which no man can, by logic or by history, exalt into a truth, the greater is the pity for them. But the result is a very instructive commentary upon the law of charity. The first generation of Protestant Episcopalians were greatly exercised by this affair of Dr. Seabury. They did not know what to do with him. He was here with a set of "orders" for which they had no liking. Whether "apostolical" or not, they did not like him, and his "succession" was a matter of grave, invincible doubt.

At the first it seemed that open war must ensue. "So strong, indeed, was the feeling entertained against him in the diocese of New York," says the biographer of Bishop Hobart, "that in the convention that followed his return in 1786 its closing resolution runs as follows: '*Resolved*, That the persons appointed to represent this Church (in general convention) be instructed not to consent to any act that may imply the validity of Dr. Seabury's ordinations.'"^{*} This was certainly a severe reproof administered to the two brethren of New York who had indorsed Dr. Seabury—Messrs. Inglis and Moore. The former had left the country, however, and the latter submitted quietly. But the brethren in Connecticut received Dr. Seabury with joy, Dr. McVickar tells us. As it was a favorite tenet of Dr. Seabury that the laity had nothing to do with the government of the Church, it is easy to see why the ten men who sent Dr. Seabury to England should rejoice at his return. The laymen, having no voice in the matter, are not consulted. The ten Tory clergymen were pleased with the result of their

^{*} Life of Hobart, p. 87.

scheme. They had outwitted Dr. White, and their Tory chaplain was preferred before the chaplain of a republican Congress.

The Memoirs of Bishop White will furnish us with much information in our efforts to solve this enigma. What was the status of Dr. Seabury after his ordination by the Non-jurors of Scotland? The "Table of Contents" of this book omits the name of Seabury, and chronicles the consecration of White and Provoost. This fact is significant. It is a singular verification of the adage, "The first shall be last, and the last first." If Seabury was a bishop at all, he was the *first* bishop; if not that, he was no bishop. But he is not placed at the head of the organization. Even the biographer of Bishop Hobart thrusts Dr. Seabury into the background. After chronicling the arrival of Bishops White and Provoost in New York on April 8, 1787, he says: "May we not in truth say, without the charge of superstition, that it was a notable coincidence that thus brought to the American Church the most precious boon which man could give, at the very moment of their being assembled in God's house to thank him for the greatest of his own heavenly gifts? It was in truth, as it were, a resurrection. Then for the first time stood forth the Protestant Episcopal Church in America vitally organized, an independent and integral portion of the Catholic apostolic Church of Christ."*

It does savor of superstition, in the judgment of many, to connect the arrival of two men ordained by an Act of Parliament with the resurrection of the Lord Jesus and the unspeakable gift of the Son of God as

*Life of Hobart, p. 92.

the Saviour of men. But, if the Church was not "vitally organized" until then, what becomes of Bishop Seabury's episcopate? For more than two years he had been in America, exercising, in a limited way, his authority. Twenty-five or thirty gentlemen had received the orders of deacon and presbyter, or "priest," as prelatists prefer to call the second grade in the ministry. Was there no "boon" in the presence of Dr. Seabury?

Dr. White mentions the arrival of Seabury with his usual diplomatic caution. Two or three gentlemen from the Southern States had received ordination from Dr. Seabury's hands. "Nevertheless the members of this convention (1785), although generally impressed with sentiments of respect toward the new bishop, and although, with the exception of a few, alleging nothing against the validity of his episcopacy, thought it the most proper to direct their views in the first instance toward England."* The nomination of Seabury was considered as done by the clergy of Connecticut "in their individual capacities," not "as a regular ecclesiastical proceeding."† For this reason, among others, the convention had been informed, the English bishops refused to ordain Seabury, being "doubtful how far the act of some clergymen, in their individual capacities, would be acquiesced in by their respective flocks."‡

There was "schism" in the air. Dr. White called his convention to meet in Philadelphia in September, 1785. Dr. Seabury called his to meet in New Haven in the summer. Dr. Seabury's ideas of Church government were few and simple. "He disapproved," says Dr.

* *Memoirs of the Church*, p. 21. † *Ibid.*, p. 91. ‡ *Ibid.*, p. 21.

White, "of submitting the general concerns of the American Church to any other than bishops." * Being the only man in America who had any claim to that office among "Churchmen," the affair was reduced to a simple matter of personal sovereignty. "I am the Church," was the motto of Dr. Seabury. He had "the courage of his convictions," too, and wrote them out, and they found their way to the Philadelphia convention. The lay brethren—"a few of them," is the diplomatic phrase of Dr. White—"spoke more warmly than the occasion seemed to justify, considering that the letter appeared to contain the honest sentiments of the writer, delivered in inoffensive terms." † Of course they were the "honest sentiments of the writer," and George III. entertained the honest sentiment that the whole thirteen colonies were a set of incorrigible rebels, over whom, by divine right, he had a lawful authority. So Dr. Seabury claims absolute monarchy in the Church for the bishop—that is, for himself. As to the "inoffensive terms" of the writer, the following quotation from Dr. Seabury's letter will furnish a satisfactory specimen:

"The plea of the Methodists is something like impudence. Mr. Wesley is only a presbyter, and all his ordinations Presbyterian, and in direct opposition to the Church of England; and they can have no pretense for calling themselves Churchmen till they return to the unity of the Church, which they have unreasonably, unnecessarily, and wickedly broken by their separation and schism." ‡

This is choice language, it may be, according to the taste of a Churchman, but for a Tory chaplain, then

* *Memoirs of the Church*, p. 112. † *Ibid.* ‡ *Life of Seabury*, p. 185.

in the pay of the King of England, to brand a community of people for whom he had neither religious sympathy nor coöperation of any kind, is as near an approach to "impudence" as the annals of the period can furnish. His ignorance of Methodism is expressed in his allusion to the term "Churchmen." The Methodists had no desire to call themselves by that name. It had no antiquity to ennoble it, no grace divine to commend it, and certainly there was nothing in Dr. Seabury or his antecedents to recommend it to Asbury and his itinerant preachers.

But to return to Dr. Seabury and the Protestant Episcopal Church. The reason which influenced the convention of 1785 to make application to England for the episcopacy is given by Dr. White. "No doubt," he says, "the sentiment was strengthened by the general disapprobation entertained in America of the prejudices which, in the year 1688, in Scotland, had deprived the Episcopal Church of her establishment, and had kept her ever since in hostility to the family on the throne."* This, being interpreted, means that the American people had no sympathy for the Scotch Jacobites, and regarded their attitude toward the house of Hanover as one of actual rebellion. The foundation of the Church of Dr. Seabury's consecrators was neither more nor less than "prejudice" against the revolution of 1688. That was the dawn of civil and religious liberty in Great Britain, and the Jacobite owls retired to the dens and caves of Scotland to perpetuate a "succession" of inveterate hatred for the changes which had made the Parliament superior to the King, and the individual conscience

* *Memoirs of the Church*, p. 113.

greater than Episcopal "orders" or convocations of the clergy.

Thus, disregarding Dr. Seabury and his supposed Episcopal ordination, application was made to England by a convention composed of sixteen clergymen and twenty-six laymen. The preponderance of laymen was a conservative feature. No Church is greatly exposed to extreme measures looking to ecclesiasticism when the legislators of the body are laymen. Dr. Seabury wanted a Church governed by bishops, and by bishops only. He wanted no Articles of Religion, for the Scotch Non-jurors had none. Opposition to the house of Hanover served them for a Confession of Faith. But the American Episcopalians wanted Articles of Religion, a Liturgy, and government by the laity and clergy combined. They followed the lead of the Presbyterians among connectional bodies, and it is doubtful whether the Episcopal Church could have been organized upon any other principles without meeting a speedy dissolution.

The two conventions did not interfere with each other. The Philadelphia body ignored the existence of Dr. Seabury, and his "convocation" proceeded with much self-satisfaction to set in order the affairs of the diocese. Great difference of opinion prevailed in Philadelphia about the Liturgy, the Articles, the Creeds; but after months of weary waiting, and some minute, if not unprofitable, debate, the Rev. Dr. White, of Pennsylvania, and the Rev. Dr. Provoost, of New York, were ordained by the Archbishop of Canterbury on the 4th of February, 1787. On the 28th of July, 1789, the Triennial Convention assembled and acknowledged the episcopacy of Bishops

White and Provoost. "At this convention there naturally occurred the importance of taking measures for the perpetuating of the succession," says Dr. White, "a matter which some circumstances had subjected to considerable difficulty."* One would suppose that, having at this time *three* bishops, and this being the number made "canonical" by the Council of Nice, there could be no great difficulty in the case. But there *was* a difficulty. The singular status of Dr. Seabury was the Gordian knot that nobody could untie, and there was no Alexander there whose sword was sharp enough to cut it. Seabury was, and he was not, a bishop. He was bishop enough to ordain clergymen in his own diocese, and votes of the convention *called* him a bishop; but when it came to placing the validity of the apostolic succession in the hands of Dr. Seabury, the convention recoiled, and none more effectively than Bishop White himself.

Dr. Griffiths, of Virginia, had been elected by the convention of his diocese, but, let it be recorded with a sense of shame that no subsequent repentance can remove, he was too poor to pay the expenses of his ordination, and there was not liberality enough among his friends to furnish him with the money for a voyage to England and the expense incurred there. Dr. White, in his most polished manner, says he was "prevented by occurrences in his domestic situation from prosecuting his intended voyage to England."† In another place the diplomatic Doctor tells us it was simply "the want of money."‡ This was a very common want, but it is a melancholy proof of the prevailing indifference to the cause of the Church. In the work

* *Memoirs of the Church*, p. 27. † *Ibid.*, p. 27. ‡ *Ibid.*, p. 167, *note*.

entitled "Fac-similes of Church Documents" is a curious paper, which will be read with interest. It will show that the "apostolical succession," whether valuable in a spiritual sense, was certainly a *costly* blessing. The voyage out and back, the expenses of maintenance, to say nothing of expected "hospitalities" there, would have exhausted the private purse of most clergymen in that day, with bills like the following as simply "incidental:"

The Right Rev. WILLIAM WHITE, D.D., Bishop of Pennsylvania.		To WILLIAM DICKES,		Dr.	
1787.				£	s. d.
January 25.	To fees paid at the Secretary of State's office for His Majesty's license authorizing the Archbishop of Canterbury to consecrate.. . . .	4	16	9	
February 4.	To fees at the Vicar-general's office, Doctor's Commons, as by account... .	6	6	4	
	To several attendances at Lord Sydney's office, Doctor's Commons, etc., and engrossing certificate of consecration and parchment.. . . .	2	2	0	
	For gratuity to Chapel Clerk at Lambeth Palace.... .	0	10	6	
	To coach hire at sundry times	0	7	6	
		£14	3	1	
To expenses of consecrating the Rev. WILLIAM WHITE, D.D., to be Bishop of Pennsylvania (consecrated Sunday, 4th of February, 1787):					
Apparitor's fee.. . . .		1	0	0	
Drawing and engraving the Act of Consecration, and stamp.		0	8	8	
Register's fee attending the consecration at Lambeth...		1	6	8	
Registering the whole proceedings... .		2	10	0	
One-half of the coach hire, etc.		0	10	6	
Register's clerk.. . . .		0	10	6	
		£6	6	4	

But what need was there for the voyage to London and this enormous personal expense? None in the world, *on the supposition that Dr. Seabury was a regularly ordained bishop of the Church.* If he was *not* a bishop, what shall we think of the convention that declared that he was? The unfortunate Dr. Griffiths resigned, and gave over the pursuit, but the question of Dr. Seabury's ordination came to the front, and was *settled* in a most remarkable way. "The subject of perpetuating the succession from England," says Dr. White, "with the relation which it bore to the question of embracing that from the Scotch Episcopacy, was brought into view by a measure of the clergy in Massachusetts and New Hampshire. This body had elected the Rev. Edward Bass, rector of St. Paul's Church in Newburyport, their bishop, and had addressed a letter to the bishops of Connecticut, New York, and Pennsylvania, praying them to unite in consecrating him." * Bishop Provoost, "although he did not appear to be possessed of personal ill-will to Bishop Seabury," says Dr. White, "was opposed to having any thing to do with the Scotch succession, which he did not hesitate to pronounce irregular." †

An "irregular succession" is something that has never been explained or defined. An "irregular succession" is, in fact, a contradiction, an absurdity. Bishop Provoost believed, and he was not alone in believing, that the Scotch succession was not simply "irregular," but it had no existence at all. The proof of this is seen in the resolution of the diocesan convention of New York, in 1788, that it was *highly necessary* "to preserve the Episcopal succession in the En-

* *Memoirs of the Church*, p. 27. † *Ibid.*, p. 163.

glish line."* Why was it necessary? If the Scotch succession led to the apostles, the English could do no more. Why, then, is it necessary to preserve the English line? In the reign of James I. the two lines of succession meet. What difference does it make whether Seabury traces his ecclesiastical ancestors back through the Scotch Church to Archbishop Whitgift, or Dr. White through the English line to the same Archbishop of Canterbury? It is trifling with common sense to deny that the Scotch succession was as good as the English if it was a valid succession at all.

The diplomacy involved in the disposal of this issue at the convention of 1789 is worthy of the genius of a Talleyrand. Bishop White, occupying the chair, places the letter before the convention. He tells them that he is anxious and ready to unite with the Episcopal Churches in the Eastern States, but "at the same time expressing his doubt of its being consistent with the faith impliedly pledged to the English prelates to proceed to any consecration without first obtaining from them the number held in their Church to be canonically necessary to such an act."† In plain English, the Archbishop of Canterbury does not believe in the Scotch succession, and to employ Seabury as a valid *third* man in the canonical *trio* is to affront the English prelates.

Dr. White does not say that they, the Americans, have actually pledged themselves, but an "impliedly pledged" faith forbids his participating with Dr. Seabury in the consecration of Dr. Bass. But the convention voted a request that the two recognized bish-

Memoirs of the Church, p. 163, *note*. † White's Memoirs, p. 28.

ops, White and Provoost, should unite with Bishop Seabury, and the convention undertook to write an address "to the archbishops and bishops of England, requesting their approbation of the measure for the removing of any difficulty or delicacy which might remain on the minds of the bishops whom they had already consecrated."* Dr. White wished to bring the Church of Connecticut into the union, "but as the Scotch succession *could not be officially recognized by the English bishops*, he wished to complete the succession from England before such a comprehension should take place."†

This diplomacy baffles all attempts at penetration into some of its mysteries. What had the English bishops to do with the recognition of Dr. Seabury? In what way could it be shown that his taking part in an ordination in America involved his "official" recognition by English bishops? He did take part in the ordination of Dr. Claggett in 1792, as Bishop Madison had meantime been ordained in England. Now why was it that the English bishops did not take offense at the recognition of Dr. Seabury in the ordination of Dr. Claggett? The reason is Dr. Seabury was the *fourth* man in the consecration, and, as only *three* were necessary, the fourth man counts for nothing, "as this could not weaken the English line of succession," says Dr. Wilson, the biographer of Dr. White.‡

Surely, outside of the pages of the Jesuits, there cannot be found such a case of subtle casuistry as this. "Implied faith" rescues Dr. White. Acting the part of a useless supernumerary satisfies Dr. Seabury. Passing a resolution to mollify the conscien-

* White's Memoirs, p. 28. † Ibid., p. 163. ‡ Life of White, p. 121.

tious convictions of two Episcopal officers, by writing an address of apology to certain foreign bishops, defines the duty of a grave Church convention, and the happy family vote themselves sublimely in accord with each other at the time they could not help seeing through every artifice employed. Dr. White and the convention were afraid of schism. They knew very well that Dr. Seabury had a following of clergymen, and these in turn must have had some constituents. They knew that the Scotch business was a matter of debate, and that any discussion of the subject was to be deprecated. "*Samuel Connecticut*," as the Tory bishop signed his name, had prescriptive rights, and intended to maintain them. The Church could not afford to debate any question, especially one that involved the very foundation of the edifice they were trying to build. These things considered, the service of Dr. White was indispensable. He seems to be the "*leus ex machinâ*" that directed the whole course of events. Dr. Bass and the brethren of New Hampshire were the only parties who had a right to complain. The former was diplomatized out of his bishopric, and the latter kept for eight years without a bishop. But it was a triumph of genius. *The intention was to get rid of Dr. Seabury and his ordinations, and it was so effectually done that not a man in America can trace his clerical succession from Bishop Seabury.*

The proofs of this assertion will be seen in their full force by a brief collation of the facts in the case Bishop Seabury attended only one triennial convention, that of 1792. He was absent from the convention of 1795, and died the next year. He assisted at the ordination of but one bishop, and then he was the

fourth, the *needless* man. By the theory of "apostolical succession" the *unnecessary* man is the *useless* man in the act of consecration. If four bishops were present, and Bishop Seabury had presided at the consecration, then, being one of the necessary three, the validity of his ordination would affect that of the man then ordained. This contingency was foreseen, of course, and Dr. White, being the canonical senior, gives place to Bishop Provoost, the second of the canonical trio. Thus it was arranged, and Dr. Seabury was outwitted in his turn. There seems to be something of poetical justice in this. Like Jacob of old, Dr. Seabury took time by the forelock, and captured the birthright blessing by dint of loyalty to King George in the first place, and obsequiousness to the house of Stuart in the last instance. But Jacob had no sooner found a home in Padan-aram than he found his match at sharp practice. Laban paid him in his own coin. So here we have the clerical Jacob secure with his birthright in possession, but this time it turns out to be the elder brother who is to pay back with interest the wrong inflicted by surreptitious "orders." Seabury is first in point of time, but by clever management he can be deprived of all spiritual posterity, and his coal quenched in Israel forever. Esau is equal to the occasion; and implied faith, and resolutions of conventions, and any amount of clerical palaver, are all expended to secure that end. "The Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States does not depend upon Dr. Seabury as an indispensable link in the chain of the apostolical succession."

The process is a very simple one. The Episcopal succession is the chain that preserves "apostolical au-

thority." Every presbyter ordained by Bishop Seabury is dead. With each presbyter dies the authority which he possessed. Granting that three bishops are necessary to consecrate another bishop, the necessary three in the ordination of Bishop Claggett were Provoost, White, and Madison. The supernumerary man was Seabury, and *the position accorded him precluded him from transmitting any authority of any kind.* His admission into the ceremony was a mere act of grace. He was weak enough to complain to Dr. White before the hour for the performance that he apprehended they intended to *exclude* him from taking any part on the occasion. Bishop Provoost "waived" his objection to coöperation with the Scotch succession, and the matter passed off very smoothly indeed. Bishop White in his life-time took part in the consecration of *twenty-seven* bishops, and *this is the only case in which he did not preside.* Is there no purpose in all this? Clear as the noonday was the intention to preserve the succession through the English line, and it is equally clear that it could not be preserved through both at the same time. Three being essential, and three of the English line being present, the fourth man, of the Scotch line, is a mere grace-note in the music, and amounts to nothing.

At the time of the union of the Eastern States with the Central and Southern in 1789, the *organization*, properly speaking, of the Protestant Episcopal Church, an incident occurred that can be told most appropriately by Dr. White:

"But a danger arose from an unexpected question on the very day of the arrival of these gentlemen. The danger was on the score of politics. Some lay

members of the convention—two of them were known, and perhaps there were more—having obtained information that Bishop Seabury, who had been chaplain to a British regiment during the war, *was now in receipt of half-pay*, entertained scruples in regard to the propriety of admitting him as a member of the convention. One of the gentlemen took the author aside at a gentleman's house, where several of the convention were dining, and stated to him this difficulty. His opinion—it is hoped the right one—was that an ecclesiastical body needed not to be overrighteous, or more so than civil bodies, on such a point; that he knew of no law of the land which the circumstance relative to a former chaplaincy contradicted; that indeed there was an article in the Confederation, then the bond of union of the States, providing that no citizen of theirs should receive title of nobility from a foreign power, a provision not extending to the receipt of money, which seemed impliedly allowed, indeed, in the guard provided against the other; that Bishop Seabury's half-pay was a compensation for former services, and not for any now expected of him; that it did not prevent his being a citizen, with all the rights attached to the character in Connecticut, and that should he or any person in like circumstances be returned a member of Congress from that State, he must necessarily be admitted of their body. The gentleman to whom the reasoning was addressed seemed satisfied, and, either from this or some other cause, the objection was not brought forward. The author very much apprehended that the contrary would happen, not because of the prejudices of the gentleman who addressed him on the subject, but be-

cause of those of another, who had started the difficulty."*

Thus it will be seen that Dr. Seabury, nearly five years after his election as a bishop of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States, was drawing half-pay as a chaplain in the British army! Dr. White's reasoning, and his views of the qualifications of a religious body—that is to say, an *ecclesiastical* body—are entirely foreign to the system of ethics known among ourselves at the present time. Between the advocate of principles so accommodating as these and the severe simplicity and the unselfish devotion of Francis Asbury, there could be no bond of sympathy, no basis of religious union.

* *Memoirs of the Church*, pp. 167, 168.

Chapter XIV.

High-church Controversies in Wesley's Youth—Dr. Sacheverell—Dr. Hoadley—Rev. Samuel Wesley Writes Sacheverell's Speech—The Kingdom of Christ—Bangorian Controversy—Lay Preachers—Charles Wesley on Hireling Priests—Illustrations—Lord King's Primitive Church—Influence upon Wesley—He Draws a Sketch of the Church—Societies not Churches—No Sacraments—Yielding to Providence—Letters from Asbury—Urgent Calls—Asbury did not Wish to be Superseded—Dr. Coke Misrepresented—Wesley in his Dotage Influenced by Coke—The Contrary Proved Beyond Question—Wesley Proposed the Plan of an American Church to Coke—The Result—Wesley could only Recommend a Bishop; the Church must Elect him—Organization of Methodism in 1784.

WHEN John Wesley was about seven years of age two famous controversialists divided the attention of the religious public in England. The first of these, Dr. Sacheverell, preached a remarkable sermon before the Lord Mayor and court of aldermen. He was "attached to the most extravagant doctrines of the High-church," says Macpherson,* and taught the doctrine of the divine right of kings in the most offensive forms, inveighing with great passion against dissenters, and advocating the doctrine of passive obedience. This sermon threw the kingdom into a ferment, and the preacher was impeached, tried by Parliament, and convicted. On his trial he read a speech in his defense, "in which he justified his doctrines with some energy and a great deal of heat, expressing his approbation of the revolution and his respect for the reigning Queen and her government."† Of this

* History of Great Britain, vol. ii., p. 393. † Ibid., p. 397.

speech Bishop Burnet says: "It was very plain the speech was made for him by others, for the style was correct and far different from his own." * In the "Memoirs of the Wesley Family," written by Dr. Adam Clarke, we are informed, upon the testimony of John Wesley, that this celebrated speech was written by his father, Rev. Samuel Wesley, rector of Epworth. † Having been a dissenter in his youth, and the son of a dissenting minister, it is difficult to see how Samuel Wesley could bring himself to aid in the defense of a man who had defamed the people to whom he once belonged. But we shall look in vain for consistency among those whose opinions have committed them to extreme and indefensible theories of government in Church or State. We cannot be surprised, therefore, that John Wesley began his career, as his brother Charles did, a High-churchman of the most pronounced type. In this regard alone the brothers differed, for John discarded and Charles retained his lofty views of clerical power and authority.

It is not a little remarkable, however, that John Wesley, whose intellectual capacity was equal to the investigation of all subjects, and whose tastes inclined him "to intermeddle with all knowledge," did not interest himself in the second of these great controversialists, who originated what has been called the Bangorian controversy. Preaching before the Lord Mayor on a State occasion, Dr. Hoadley, in 1710, advocated the doctrine that the people possessed the right, in extreme cases, to rise up against their rulers and to dethrone a monarch who had become a despot.

* History of his Own Time, vol. iv., p. 283. † Wesley Family, p. 186.

In other words, the title of the reigning Queen, Anne, resting upon the lawfulness of the revolution of 1688, the preacher only maintained those opinions that ministered to the peace and quietude of the kingdom. The High-church party, however, pursued the preacher with great vindictiveness; but a few years later he was made Bishop of Bangor, and delivered a sermon which gave even greater offense to High-churchmen. In 1717 he preached before the King a sermon on "The Nature of the Kingdom or Church of Christ." No controversy, it is said, "ever attracted so much attention for the time it continued, nor enlisted so large a number of combatants." "It was the purpose of the author, in the sermon which gave occasion to this controversy, to make it appear from the Scriptures that the kingdom of Christ is in all respects a spiritual kingdom, in which Christ himself is the only King and Lawgiver. Temporal governments and laws have no just control in this kingdom. The authority of Christ and his apostles demands our undivided respect and submission. Human penalties and encouragements to enforce religious assent are not consistent with the principles of the gospel. They may produce a unity of profession, but not of faith; they may make hypocrites, but not sincere Christians." *

These sentiments, eminently in accord with the principles taught by Wesley in subsequent years, were not acceptable to the household of Epworth rectory. Both the father and the mother of the Wesleys knew what it was to suffer the frowns of the Government because of dissenting opinions; but, having embraced the tenets of the Church, they gave their influence in

* Sparks's *Essays*, vol. i., p. 245

behalf of the most decided High-church theories. Young as he was, however, we can scarcely conceive of John Wesley as of one entirely indifferent to the subject of this discussion. He was preparing to enter Christ Church College at Oxford when the Bishop of Bangor published his "Answer to the Representation drawn up by the Committee of the Lower House of Convocation."* This committee had affirmed the doctrines of Bishop Hoadley to be dangerous to the welfare of the Church and State. In this answer he proposed to compare every thing which he either received or rejected "with the principles of reason, the declarations of the gospel, and the main foundations of the Reformation." It is scarcely possible to read this sermon and its defense without yielding a hearty assent to the arguments of the author. It was charged that his principles tended to produce anarchy and confusion, and to subvert all discipline in the Church. He replied, showing that his theory of government was the only one that admitted of any discipline whatever, and that the legitimate consequence was a well-regulated order, coëxisting with individual liberty. He had affirmed in the sermon that "Christ has left behind him no visible human authority; no vicegerents who can be said properly to supply his place; no interpreters upon whom his subjects are absolutely to depend; no judges over the consciences or religion of his people." These words appear to us, in the latter part of the nineteenth century, as containing principles inseparable from Protestant Christianity; and we can conceive of no medium between these views and the doctrines of the Church of Rome.

* Printed in 1717.

But John Wesley was not then a converted man. He was seeking, like Saul of Tarsus, to establish his own righteousness; and when it pleased God to lead the troubled spirit of his servant to the rest of faith in the blood of a crucified Redeemer step by step, taught of the Lord in providence and by the ministry of others, the prelatical prejudices of his youth gave way, and he became the Lord's freeman, rejoicing in the glorious liberty of the gospel. A young believer is unconsciously developed into a preacher, and shows the work of the Spirit in results that could not be questioned. One of the clerical privileges—that of preaching, of *teaching* the way of life—was shown by the facts in the case to be separable from episcopal ordination. The Lord Jesus, by his Holy Spirit, had not abdicated the throne in favor of this or that bishop of a diocese, but still retained the prerogative to call whomsoever he pleased to be ambassadors to the nations and workmen in the vineyard. A man on whose head no prelate's hands had been placed became a son of thunder, under whose resistless eloquence scores and hundreds were made new creatures in Christ Jesus. Wesley saw, reasoned, and was convinced. One of the outposts of High-church prejudice was taken by storm by the developing providence of God. Soon the lines of demarkation were drawn distinctly. Men who claimed "apostolical succession" laughed, sneered, or anathematized the work of God. Mitered bishops frowned, and some of them threatened, but none of them in England condescended to hear or to investigate, if perchance they might know whereof these witnesses were testifying. That overseers of the flock of Christ could roll in luxury and feast and revel

while the people were perishing for lack of knowledge seemed to this evangelist to be a thing incredible until he became an eye-witness of the fact. Giving all his time, all his thoughts, to the one great purpose, to disseminate the word of life, to sow the seed of the kingdom, he did not fear the frown nor court the favor of men of high degree. Graceful in manner, tender in spirit, as courteous to the grimy-faced collier as to the wearer of a coronet, he mourned when he was expelled from the Churches—not because *he* was dishonored, but because Christ was wounded in the house of his professed friends. But when ecclesiastical lords and titled clergymen held up the gospel to ridicule, and turned the lame and the blind out of the way of life, the spirit of his brother Charles was stirred within him. High-churchman as he was, the poet of Methodism turned his holy indignation into rhymes which have not lost their point though more than a century of time divides us from the occasion that inspired them:

Master, for thine we cannot own
 The workmen who themselves create,
 Their call receive from man alone
 As licensed servants of the State;
 Who to themselves the honor take,
 Nor tarry till thy Spirit move,
 But serve, for filthy lucre's sake,
 The souls they neither feed nor love.
 In vain in their own lying words
 The haughty self-deceivers trust;
 The harvest's and the vineyard's lords
 In vain the true succession boast;
 Their lawful property they claim
 The apostolic ministry;
 But only laborers in name,
 They prove they are not sent by thee.

The men who provoked these shafts of keenest steel were too busily engaged in securing their own personal advancement to care for any condemnation that did not involve the loss of a lucrative living. Whoever has taken the pains to read the biographies of some of the prelates of the English Church who flourished during the eighteenth century will see how shameless was the struggle for places that had large incomes attached to their possession. If the loss of a bishopric gave pungency and venom to the pen of the famous Dean of St. Patrick's, the loss of expected "translations" and "elevations," and gifts of deaneries and bishoprics, has caused the clergymen of the last century to publish their shame to the world in many a ponderous volume. While a bishop of Norwich was filling the halls of political patronage with plaintive appeals and passionate protests because he was compelled to exist upon the paltry sum of eight thousand five hundred dollars per annum, a vigorous Methodist bishop was riding on horseback a distance of five or six thousand miles a year, with the princely compensation of sixty-four dollars per annum! Who can read the life of this prelate of Norwich, and others of his ilk, and fail to realize the forcible lines of Charles Wesley?

Venerable gamesters play,
Right venerable men,
Each contends the goodliest prey,
The largest share to gain;
Eager each the whole to engross,
As Churchmen never satisfied,
First they nail him to the cross.
And then the spoils divide.

It was amidst scenes and struggles of this charac-

ter that John Wesley, fresh from the tombstone pulpit in his native town, turned, with all the energy of his character, to the study of the nature and constitution of the Church of Christ. "Lord King's 'Account of the Primitive Church' convinced me many years ago," he writes in 1784, "that bishops and presbyters are the same order, and consequently have the same right to ordain."* The exact date of his change of views is recorded in the Journal, January 20, 1746, so that nearly forty years had elapsed before he acted upon the principles laid down by the Lord High Chancellor of England. But the adoption of these views in 1746 was only the sequel to the graphic reasoning which he had recorded in the Conference in the preceding year, 1745:

"*Quest.* Is Episcopal, Presbyterian, or Independent Church government most agreeable to reason? *Ans.* The plain origin of Church government seems to be this: Christ sends forth a person to preach the gospel; some of those who hear him repent, and believe in Christ; they then desire him to watch over them, to build them up in faith, and to guide their souls into paths of righteousness. Here, then, is an independent congregation, subject to no pastor but their own; neither liable to be controlled in things spiritual by any other man or body of men whatsoever. But soon after some from other parts, who were occasionally present while he was speaking in the name of the Lord, beseech him to come over and help them also. He complies, yet not till he confers with the wisest and holiest of his congregation; and, with their consent, appoints one who has gifts and grace to watch

* Letter to Dr. Coke, Mr. Asbury, and our brethren in America.

over his flock in his absence. If it please God to raise another flock in the new place before he leaves them, he does the same thing, appointing one whom God hath fitted for the work to watch over these souls also. In like manner, in every place where it pleases God to gather a little flock by his word, he appoints one, in his absence, to take the oversight of the rest, to assist them as of the ability which God giveth.

“These are deacons, or servants of the Church; and they look upon their first pastor as the common father of all these congregations, and regard him in the same light and esteem him still as the shepherd of their souls. These congregations are not strictly independent, as they depend upon one pastor, though not upon each other. As these congregations increase, and the deacons grow in years and grace, they need other subordinate deacons, or helpers, in respect to whom they may be called presbyters or elders, as their father in the Lord may be called the bishop or overseer of them all.”

This is a plain, straightforward account of the rise and progress of the Methodists in England, as well as a clear view of the origin of the Church of Christ in the apostolic age. The salvation of the souls of men is the prime object of all Church association. That system of Church government which promotes the salvation of the greatest number of souls is the system most agreeable to the Holy Scriptures. As the object is one, the methods are many. “There is one spirit, but a diversity of administrations.” The local or political environment of a people may make one form of administration more effective than another; but, until all the conditions and degrees of civ-

ilization and social culture and mental attainments are uniform, we cannot expect one invariable form of Church organization to be adapted to all times, places, and peoples.

Mr. Wesley and his helpers organized hundreds of "Societies." They were not "churches," nor did they, combined, form a Church. They lacked one essential feature of Church life. They had "the pure word of God" preached among them and to them. They were undoubtedly godly men and women; their piety was not questioned, and when any man's lack of religious purpose was proved, he was promptly laid aside. They had a true ministry, "full of faith and of the Holy Ghost." They lacked but one thing—the administration of the sacraments. Wherever Mr. Wesley and a few other ordained clergymen met, the ordinances were administered; but it was impossible for two or three men to supply the needs of many thousands. What hindered the penitent people from being baptized? the happy, regenerate souls from partaking of the Supper of the Lord? Who could forbid them to remember their dying Lord in the wine and bread of the holy communion, given them by the beloved ministers who had taught them the way to the cross and rejoiced with them when their mourning was turned into gladness? Who could hear the eloquent speech of a soul new born into the kingdom of grace, and still forbid him to put on the badge of the covenant in the ordinance of baptism? Nothing but the strongest persuasion that the glory of God and the salvation of the souls of men might be best advanced by a steady resistance to popular desire, and to the manifest dictates of human reason, could have influenced

John Wesley in his persistent adherence to a Church whose toleration was indifference and its charity contempt. That he held this position for nearly fifty years is the one inscrutable enigma in his remarkable career. That he was sincere no man capable of forming an unprejudiced opinion can doubt. That he was in error is scarcely a debatable question at this day. That he failed in his purpose to reform the Church of England is simply to confess that he belonged to the long list of eminent laborers in the kingdom who have given their lives to the work of reforming their societies by working within, and by methods harmonizing with "Church order." From Savonarola to Rigii the Roman Church can count scores of reformers who lived and prayed and worked, but died under the iron heel of a power which they had hoped by holy fire to transmute into the fine gold of the kingdom of God. From fallen Adam to the latest born of women, a "self-reforming" organism is unknown to human society.

But Wesley saw the need, and wisely yielded—not to the persuasions of men, nor to the blandishments of personal ambition, nor to the weaknesses engendered by the fourscore years of his pilgrimage, but to the providence of God, written in the chasm that war had made, and uttered forth in the voice of events more eloquent than human speech and more instructive than the wisdom of the wise. A new people had sprung into being, and from this people, in the midst of their struggle for political freedom, came a request which he dare not refuse. He was their apostle in a high and holy sense. They had never seen his face in the flesh, but in the rude mansion of the prosper-

ous farmer, in the log-hut of the hardy pioneer, in town and city, and in country-places here and there in the vast forests of the New World, the gracious teachings of the Book of God translated into the experience of a living soul arrested the attention, absorbed the thoughts, and led the souls of men to Christ. Tears and shouts of joy, heart-burnings of living fire enkindled, followed the reading of this holy man's simple words and unpolished sentences. The Spirit of God had given to him many thousands in America who looked up to him as their shepherd, their bishop of souls. The hireling ministry the sheep knew not; and for their pompous pretensions of mystic grace, befouled by the contact of a hundred or a thousand impious "links" in the rusty chain of succession, they cared not.

Mr. Wesley had received the letters from Francis Asbury, written in 1780, describing the compromise which had arrested the action of the Virginia brethren. He did not act hastily nor inconsistently. He studied the question from every point of view. "I firmly believe I am a scriptural *επισκοπος*, as much as any man in England or in Europe," he wrote in 1785, nearly twelve months after he had ordained Dr. Coke. When he notified the Conference in July, 1784, that he purposed sending Dr. Coke to America, the English preachers knew that this was a special mission, and for no ordinary purpose. If Wesley did not inform the Conference of all the particulars, it was because nothing had been positively determined further than the act of sending a representative who was authorized to do for the Americans all that Wesley could have done if he had been present. Francis Asbury had

written a letter to a friend in London in which he was understood to say that he would not receive any man whom Mr. Wesley might send to supersede him in the general superintendency in America.* This was an erroneous interpretation. What Mr. Asbury meant was that he could not receive, even from Mr. Wesley, an appointment which was not indorsed by the Church in America. Asbury, although a native of England, had become a firm advocate of popular rights, and he understood, as neither Mr. Wesley nor Dr. Coke could understand, the genius of the American people, and the nature of their surroundings. He saw that an independent Church was inevitable, and that the time for its organization had arrived. Precisely how that organization was to be effected he did not undertake to say, but plainly intimated that the new Church must have the approval of those who constituted it, and that this approval must be one of hearty conviction, not of respectful acquiescence in the judgment of Mr. Wesley.

Dr. Whitehead, in his life of Mr. Wesley, has given the occasion for a grievous misrepresentation of Dr. Coke in connection with the plan for organizing the American Church. He says Mr. Wesley suffered himself to be influenced by Dr. Coke, and that the suggestion was first made by Coke that Wesley should ordain him a "superintendent," or bishop, and send him to America. Episcopalians, with great unanimity, delight to represent Wesley as an infirm old man, more than fourscore years of age, in the hands of an ambitious, scheming, astute adviser who prevailed upon the venerable man to take a hasty step for which

* Life of Coke, by Etheridge, p. 134.

he was soon bitterly repentant.* “With an intellect enfeebled by the weight of fourscore and two years, he was seduced, by those who would use his vast influence for purposes of their own,” says Dr. Hawks, “into the adoption of a plan which his more vigorous understanding had more than once rejected.”† Assertions are easily made, and insinuations require but little effort when conscience does not interfere. But if there is one line, one fact, one word of proof in existence to show that Mr. Wesley had at any time *rejected* the plan which he *adopted* in 1784, it would have been more in accordance with truth and honesty if Dr. Hawks had furnished the proof to support his assertion. Not a word can be produced to prove any thing of the kind. A simple statement of the facts will place the whole matter in a light which makes comment needless.

In February, 1784, Mr. Wesley, in his study in City Road, first divulged his purpose to Dr. Coke.‡ “He stated to him that, as the Revolution in America had separated the United States from the mother country forever, and the Episcopal Establishment was utterly abolished, the Societies had been represented to him as in a most deplorable condition; that an appeal had also been made to him through Mr. Asbury, in which he was requested to provide for them some mode of Church government suited to their exigences, and that, having long and seriously revolved the subject in his thoughts, he intended to adopt the plan which he was now about to unfold; that as he had invariably endeavored, in every step he had taken, to keep as close-

* Whitehead's *Life of Wesley*, p. 520. † Protestant Episcopal Church in Virginia, p. 170. ‡ Etheridge: *Life of Coke*, p. 130.

ly to the Bible as possible, so on the present occasion he hoped he was not about to deviate from it; that, keeping his eye upon the primitive Churches in the ages of unadulterated Christianity, he had much admired the mode of ordaining bishops which the Church of Alexandria had practiced. To preserve its purity, that Church would never suffer the interference of a foreign bishop in any of their ordinations, but the presbyters, on the death of a bishop, exercised the right of ordaining another from their own body; and this practice continued among them for two hundred years, till the days of Dionysius. And finally, that, being himself a presbyter, he wished Dr. Coke to accept [episcopal] ordination from his hands, and to proceed in that character to the continent of America to superintend the Societies in the United States.”*

Dr. Coke prior to this time—February, 1784—had received no information concerning the matter, nor did he give his consent to the measure immediately. He required time to consider the question; for, great as was his respect for Mr. Wesley, it was manifest that this proceeding was not in accordance with the discipline of the Church of England. That was not an insuperable difficulty, however. The principal obstacle was the authority for this proceeding derivable from the sacred Scriptures. “He now applied himself to those Biblical and patristic studies which bear upon the subject; and after the lapse of two months, spent partly in Scotland, communicated to Mr. Wesley that the conclusions at which he had arrived enabled him without any hesitation to concur with himself as to the abstract lawfulness of the measure which

* Drew's Life of Coke, p. 63.

had been proposed.”* Notwithstanding this agreement of opinion with Wesley, Dr. Coke wrote, in April, 1784, suggesting that some one should be sent to ascertain the condition of things in America, and to consult with the American Methodists as to the propriety of the plan proposed. This certainly exhibits no eagerness upon the part of Dr. Coke to accept the mission. At the Conference in July, 1784, at Leeds, the plan was proposed, Mr. Fletcher advocating it, and it was unanimously adopted. It was not until after the Conference had adjourned that Dr. Coke wrote the letter that forms the basis of Dr. Whitehead’s misrepresentations. In this letter Dr. Coke suggests that two presbyters should be sent with him, for there was but one Episcopal minister in the United States who was friendly to the Methodists, and he—Mr. Jarratt—might not indorse the plan of Church government proposed. “In short,” says Dr. Coke, “it appears to me that every thing should be prepared, and every thing proper to be done that can possibly be done, this side the water.”†

There is no difficulty whatever in interpreting these words of Dr. Coke. He knew that Wesley could only recommend, and that the Methodists in America must decide the question, both as to the man sent to them and the plan of government proposed. But he did not wish to go without credentials, for the life of Mr. Wesley was uncertain, and he, a young man comparatively, and almost unknown even by name in America, would be awkwardly situated if he had no more than Mr. Wesley’s letter of appointment. A solemn service of consecration was held in a private house in

* Etheridge: *Life of Coke*, p. 132. † *Ibid.*, p. 135.

Bristol, but only there because the Conference was not in session; and the people of Bristol had no more to do with this matter than the people of Aberdeen had to do with the ordination of Dr. Seabury six weeks afterward. Both ordinations were performed in private houses. But Mr. Wesley violated no *law* of the land, while the ordainers of Dr. Seabury did. Fifteen thousand Methodist communicants in America called for the ordination which Wesley performed; whereas *ten* Tory clergymen, "in their private capacities," in a secret meeting, requested the ordination of Dr. Seabury. The ordination of Dr. Seabury was performed in a private dwelling-house by virtue of *necessity*, for a public proceeding would have brought upon the actors the penalty of the statute of præmunire. Mr. Wesley ordained Dr. Coke in a private house as a matter of *choice*, as the proceeding had no connection with any public interest in England.

Thus did John Wesley, on the 2d day of September, 1784, "by the imposition of hands" and prayer, assisted by other ordained ministers, set apart Thomas Coke, a presbyter of the Church of England, for the office of superintendent in America. Under date of August 30, 1785, relating the facts concerning this appointment, he says: "These are the steps which, not of choice, but necessity, I have slowly and deliberately taken. If any one is pleased to call this separating from the Church, he may; but the law of England does not call it so."* The spirit of perversity which seems to possess a certain class of critics when referring to these events makes Wesley say that the work Dr. Coke was appointed to do was not to pro-

* Works, vol. xiii., p. 256.

note a separation from the Church of England. He means that *he* does not separate from the Church of England by making this appointment and helping the people of another country to organize a Church. There was no Act of Parliament that prevented Mr. Wesley from ordaining Dr. Coke. But there were Acts of Parliament that prevented the Archbishop of Canterbury from ordaining Dr. White. It was only by a change in the laws of Great Britain that the "priceless boon of apostolical succession" could be conferred upon America. The Methodists of America had no further connection with the Church of England than their relation to Mr. Wesley involved. When he became to them a foreigner, they exercised the right of a free people in choosing their form of Church government, and elected the bishops that had been recommended to them by the great and good man whose name becomes more and more illustrious with every effort to study his works and to analyze his character.

Chapter XV.

Arrival of Coke, Whatcoat, and Vasey—Meeting at Barratt's Chapel—Asbury Consents to his Election—Foolish Assertions—Wesley Did Intend to Organize an Episcopal Church in the United States—Proofs—Mr. Spooner's Tract—Rev. Thoms Ware at the Christmas Conference—Contrasting the Beginnings—Great Efforts and Several Years Consumed in Organizing the Protestant Episcopal Church—Four Months Only Required from the First Movement to the Complete Organization of Methodism in America—High-church Doctrine of "Apostolical Succession"—Archbishop Whately—Silence of Scripture—No Pedigree—No Line of Bishops in Personal Succession—Difficulties of Prelacy—Bishops who were Never Ordained at All—Thomas Cranmer—Testimonies—Source of Ministerial Authority—Duties Must be Defined—A Broken Link.

THOMAS COKE, Richard Whatcoat, and Thomas Vasey arrived in America in due season, and met Mr. Asbury at Barratt's Chapel, in Maryland, on Sunday, Nov. 15, 1784. "I was shocked when first informed of the intention of these, my brethren, in coming to this country," says Mr. Asbury; "it may be of God. My answer then was, If the preachers unanimously choose me, I shall not act in the capacity I have hitherto done by Mr. Wesley's appointment. The design of organizing the Methodists into an Independent Episcopal Church was opened to the preachers present, and it was agreed to call a general conference, to meet at Baltimore the ensuing Christmas, as also that Brother Garrettsen go off to

Virginia to give notice thereof to our brethren in the South."*

It has been alleged again and again by Protestant Episcopal writers that Mr. Wesley did not intend to organize an independent Church in the United States. One of these writers (the Rev. John Alden Spooner), in a tract entitled "*Methodism as Held by Wesley*," exceeds all others by the brazen effrontery with which he mangles, distorts, and grossly misrepresents the writings of Mr. Wesley and the Methodists. It would be a distasteful and perhaps a fruitless task to expose the slanders which this man has inclosed within the limits of a tract containing less than fifty pages. Two illustrations will be given of the manner in which this "successor of the apostles" has grossly, and it must be *designedly*, abused the writings of Mr. Wesley. To show that Mr. Wesley did not *intend* to establish a Methodist Church in America, he quotes from a letter written to Rev. Freeborn Garrettson *two years* after Dr. Coke's arrival in the United States. "Wherever there is any Church service," says Wesley to Garrettson, "I do not approve of any appointment the same hour." (Vol. vii., p. 185.)†

Now, if Mr. Spooner did not know that F. Garrettson was in *Nova Scotia* when this letter was written to him by Mr. Wesley, he is not the man to undertake to write history or to criticise the writings of others. *Nova Scotia* being outside of the United States, being a British province, the Church of England had some jurisdiction there, and an excellent Tory clergyman from New York was subsequently appointed bishop

*Asbury's Journal, vol. i., p. 376. †*Methodism as Held by Wesley*, p. 27.

of the province. But what shall we say of a man who professes to be a teacher in Israel and is either ignorant enough to make a gross blunder of this kind or malicious enough to misrepresent and pervert the writings of another?

One more illustration will suffice. "See his emphatic declaration in 1785, a year after he had entirely completed all this boasted change, viz.: 'Whatever then is done, either in America or Scotland, is no separation from the Church of England. I have no thought of this; I have many objections to it.'" (Vol. vii., p. 315.)*

The annals of partisan politics will scarcely furnish a more palpable case of gross and willful misrepresentation. Mr. Spooner strives to make Mr. Wesley say that Dr. Coke was not authorized to organize a Church in America, and that no Church had been organized, for whatever had been done was not a separation from the Church of England. Now, a mere glance at the paragraph from which the words quoted are taken will show: Firstly, there was no Church of England in America, therefore the organization of the Methodist Church in America was no separation from the Church of England; secondly, the English Church never had any jurisdiction in Scotland, therefore whatever was done in that country there was no separation *there* from the Church of England. This is Mr. Wesley's argument, and nothing but inveterate prejudice can fail to see it. But to such men as this writer the cause of "the Church" sanctifies any means, however vile, "for the greater glory of God."

Returning to the question of the organization of

*Methodism as Held by Wesley, p. 27.

the Church, we have only to recall the words of Mr. Wesley previously quoted in order to realize the situation of the American Methodists in 1784. They regarded Mr. Wesley as the man to whom, under Providence, they owed their existence as a religious society. They had eighty-one traveling preachers and fifteen thousand members. The preachers represented the people, not by actual election, but by the strongest of bonds—unity of interest and sentiment.

“At the Christmas Conference we met to congratulate each other,” says the Rev. Thomas Ware, “and to praise the Lord that he had disposed the mind of our excellent Wesley to renounce the fable of uninterrupted succession and prepare the way for furnishing us with the long-desired privileges we were thenceforward expecting to enjoy. The announcement of the plan devised by him for our organization as a Church filled us with solemn delight. It answered to what we did suppose, during our labors and privations, we had reason to expect our God would do for us; for in the integrity of our hearts we verily believed his design in raising up the preachers called Methodists in this country was to reform the continent and spread scriptural holiness through these lands. And we accordingly looked to be inducted, in due time, with the panoply of God. We therefore, according to the best of our knowledge, received and followed the advice of Mr. Wesley, as stated in our form of discipline.”* Mr. Dickens proposed the name, “Methodist Episcopal Church,” and it was adopted unanimously.

“Neither Mr. Asbury nor any of his coadjutors be-

* Memoir of Rev. Thos. Ware, p. 105.

lieved in the divine, exclusive rights of prelacy," says Mr. Ware, "any more than they believed in transubstantiation; but they did believe that a divine interposition was manifest in the rise and spread of Methodism, and that Mr. Wesley was an extraordinary man, who was the chief instrument in the hands of God in this work."* For this reason, the sixty-three preachers who organized the Methodist Episcopal Church were disposed to listen to the counsel and to follow the advice of the founder of Methodism. They did not believe him to be infallible, and therefore they did not follow his directions without first weighing every argument that could be presented for and against the proposed measure. They did not accept Dr. Coke and Mr. Asbury as bishops or superintendents appointed by Mr. Wesley. They elected these two men by a unanimous vote of the body, and the utmost harmony prevailed among them. Mr. Wesley required them to concede nothing, to change nothing, to believe nothing less or more than they held at the time of their meeting.

Let the contrast be made with that Society whose origin forms the principal theme of Dr. White in the "*Memoirs of the Church.*" Forty-two persons, twenty-six of whom were laymen, formed the first convention of the Episcopalians in the United States. This assembly was the result of more than twelve months of effort and agitation looking toward the organization of a Church. In Baltimore, on forty days' notice, sixty-three American Methodists met, organized their Church, and adjourned to sound the trumpet of the gospel throughout the land. They neither asked nor

* *Memoir of Rev. Thos. Ware*, p. 111.

wanted the aid of foreign bishops nor of foreign princes. The Episcopalians had taxed the patience of John Adams and Benjamin Franklin; they had circulars issued by the President of Congress and by the Governors of States; they had filled the air with pitiful lamentations because of the desolation that had followed the desertion of their ministers and the inevitable results of the struggle of a brave people for the right of self-government. All this, and more, characterized the early days of the Protestant Episcopal Church. During the twenty-five months that Dr. White was waiting upon his grace the Archbishop of Canterbury, more than ten thousand souls had been converted, and had joined the Methodist Church! Was ever the hand of God more visible in the affairs of men than his blessing was manifest in the prosperity of this the first organized Episcopal Church in America?

Before Dr. White could be empowered to distribute episcopal graces in America, the Episcopalians were compelled to retract their doings and to modify their faith. They said they did not believe the article of the so-called Apostles' Creed which affirms the "descent of Christ into hell." The archbishop told them that if they did not replace this article they should have none of his "succession." And the convention voted back an article which a short time previously they had declared incredible.* The Bishop of Landaff (Dr. Watson) said he knew not of any scriptural authority for the article except 1 Peter iii. 19, 20, and this text he affirmed to be very doubtful.† Nevertheless, he joined his brother bishops in the resolution to deny "the boon" of episcopacy to America unless the

*White's Memoirs, p. 125. †Ibid., p. 126.

omitted article was replaced in the creed. Was "the boon" worth the price that was paid for it? If the purchasers were satisfied, no one else has a right to complain; but let it be granted to the American Methodists that, having not the slightest faith in a pretended "apostolical succession," they would not become parties to a negotiation for which they had neither time nor taste.

But they do not rest their cause in the opinion of Mr. Wesley nor the example of Dr. Coke. The High-church theory of "apostolical succession" is not the doctrine of the Church of England. That Mr. Wesley occupied only the clerical position of a presbyter in the Church is admitted. But in the early Christian Church, according to Lord King, "there are clearer proofs of the presbyters' ordaining than there are of their administering the Lord's Supper."* "It is acknowledged by the stoutest champions for episcopacy," says Bishop Stillingfleet, "before these late unhappy divisions, that *ordination performed by presbyters is valid*, which I have already shown doth evidently prove that episcopal government is not founded upon any unalterable divine right."† This is the main purpose of his great work, "The Irenicum, or Pacificator"—to prove that there is no form of Church government prescribed in the Holy Scriptures, but the wisdom of the age must be employed in adapting the institutions of the Church to the spiritual wants of men.

Archbishop Whately goes farther than Bishop Stillingfleet, and affirms that the absence of a specific form of Church government in the New Testament is

* Lord King's Primitive Church, p. 67. † Irenicum, p. 438.

not only by design, but that there is proof of a special divine influence producing that result. "We are left, then," he says, "and indeed, unavoidably led, to the conclusion that, in respect of these points, the apostles and their followers were, during the age of inspiration, *supernaturally withheld* from recording those circumstantial details which were not intended by Divine Providence to be absolutely binding on all Churches in every age and country, but were meant to be left to the discretion of each particular Church."* "While the *principles*, in short, are clearly recognized and strongly inculcated which Christian communities and individual members of them are to keep in mind and act upon with a view to the great objects for which those communities were established, the *precise modes* in which these objects are in each case to be promoted, are left—one can hardly doubt, studiously left—undefined."† "It was by the *special appointment* of the Holy Spirit that Paul and Barnabas were *ordained* to the very highest office—the apostleship—not by the hands of the other *apostles* or of any persons at Jerusalem, but by the *elders of Antioch*. This would have been the less remarkable had *no human* ordination at all taken place but merely a special, immediate appointment of them by divine revelation; but the command given was, 'Separate me let them go.'‡ "There is not a minister in all Christendom who is able to trace up, with any approach to certainty, his own spiritual pedigree."§

These quotations from one of the most learned prelates in the Church of Ireland are in full accord with

* Kingdom of Christ, p. 111. † Ibid., p. 117. ‡ Ibid., p. 140. § Ibid., p. 217.

the views of the great majority of the divines of the Church of England from the age of Cranmer to our own day. But Archbishop Whately proceeds to give a case in illustration of the principle that a true Church of Christ may be constituted by laymen only. He quotes from Luther as follows: "If any pious laymen were banished to a desert, and, having no regularly consecrated priest among them, were to agree to choose for that office one of their number, married or unmarried, this man would be as truly a priest as if he had been consecrated by all the bishops in the world. Augustine, Ambrose, and Cyprian were chosen in this manner. Hence, it follows that laity and priests, princes and bishops—or, as they say, the clergy and laity—have in reality nothing to distinguish them but their *functions*. They all belong to the same estate, but all have not the same work to perform."*

Following this line of thought, the Archbishop proceeds to elaborate the argument:

"But it would be absurd to maintain that men placed in such a situation as has been here supposed are to be shut out, generation after generation, from the Christian ordinances and the gospel covenant. Their circumstances would constitute them—as many as could be brought to agree in the essentials of faith and Christian worship—a Christian community, and would require them to do that which, if done *without* such necessity, would be schismatical. To make regulations for the Church thus constituted and to appoint as its ministers the fittest persons that could be found among them, and to celebrate the Christian rites,

* Kingdom of Christ, p. 317.

would be a proceeding not productive, as in the other case, of division, but of union. And it would be a compliance clearly pointed out to them by the Providence which had placed them in that situation with the manifest will of our heavenly Master that Christians should live in a religious community under such officers and regulations as are essential to the existence of every community.

“To say that Christian ministers thus appointed would be, to all intents and purposes, real legitimate Christian ministers, and that the ordinances of such a Church would be no less valid and efficacious—supposing always that they are not in themselves superstitious and unscriptural—than those of any other Church, is merely to say in other words that it would *be* a real Christian Church; possessing, consequently, in common with *all communities*, of whatever kind, the essential rights of a community to have officers and by-laws; and possessing also, in common with all *Christian communities*—i. e., Churches—the especial sanction of our Lord and his promise of ratifying (‘binding in heaven’) its enactments.

“It really does seem not only absurd but even impious to represent it as the Lord’s will that persons who are believers in his gospel should, in consequence of the circumstances in which his providence has placed them, condemn themselves and their posterity to live as heathens, instead of conforming as closely as those circumstances will allow to the institutions and directions of Christ and his apostles by combining themselves into a Christian society, regulated and conducted in the best way they can on gospel principles. And if such a society does enjoy the divine

blessing and favor, it follows that its proceedings, its enactments, its officers, are legitimate and apostolical as long as they are conformable to the principles which the apostles have laid down and recorded for our use, even as those—of whatever race ‘after the flesh’—who embraced and faithfully adhered to the gospel were called by the apostles ‘Abraham’s seed’ and ‘the Israel of God.’ The ministers of such a Church as I have been supposing would rightly claim ‘apostolical succession,’ because they would *rightfully hold the same office* which the apostles conferred on those ‘elders whom they ordained in every city.’”*

The claims of High-churchmen to a regular succession of bishops handing down ministerial authority from the days of the apostles are so absurd that there is no writer who has seriously attempted to prove a true *succession*. The existence of officers *called* bishops can be proved beyond a doubt, for *presbyters* were so called by St. Paul. There has been no century, no generation, no *day* in the time intervening in which bishops have not existed in the Church. But this admission lacks a great deal of proving that these officers called “bishops” exercised the same powers, performed the same duties, or followed each other in a *tactual* succession. The bishops who figure in the so-called “lines” of succession displayed in Chapin’s “Primitive Church” and books of the same class are mere disconnected units, and constitute a “chain” in the same way that a thousand grains of sand make a rope. They received nothing from each other, they gave nothing to each other; and therefore they were not connected with each other. If not so connected,

* Kingdom of Christ, pp. 232–234.

they can in no proper sense form a *succession* for the transmission of authority. The High-church view of this question is thus examined by Archbishop Whately:

“The sacramental virtue—for such it is that is implied, whether the term be used or not in the principle I have been speaking of—dependent on the imposition of hands, with a due observance of apostolical usages, by a bishop himself duly consecrated, after having been in like manner baptized into the Church and ordained deacon and priest—this sacramental virtue, if a single link of the chain be faulty, must, on the above principle, be utterly nullified ever after in respect of all the links that hang on that one. For if a bishop had not been duly consecrated, or had not been previously rightly ordained, his ordinations are null; and so are the ministrations of those ordained by him, and their ordinations of others—supposing any of the persons ordained by him to attain to the episcopal office—and so on without end. The poisonous taint of informality, if it once creep in undetected, will spread the infection of nullity to an indefinite and irremediable extent. And who can undertake to pronounce that, during that long period usually designated as the Dark Ages, no such taint ever was introduced? Irregularities could not have been wholly excluded without a perpetual miracle; and that no such miraculous interference existed we have even historical proof.

We read of bishops consecrated when mere children; of men officiating who barely knew their letters; of prelates expelled, and others put into their places by violence; of illiterate and profligate laymen and habitual drunkards admitted to holy orders; and,

in short, of the prevalence of every kind of disorder and reckless disregard of the decency which the apostle enjoins. It is inconceivable that any one even moderately acquainted with history can feel a certainty, or any approach to certainty, that amidst all this confusion and corruption every requisite form was, in every instance, strictly adhered to by men, many of them openly profane and secular, unrestrained by public opinion, through the gross ignorance of the population among which they lived, and that no one not duly consecrated, or ordained, was admitted to sacred offices.

Even in the memory of persons living there existed a bishop concerning whom there was so much mystery and uncertainty pervading as to when, where, and by whom he had been ordained that doubts existed in the minds of some persons whether he had ever been ordained at all.”*

At the first mention of these facts it may occur to the reader that an office of such dignity and value as that of a Christian bishop would necessarily be guarded against the influences mentioned by the Archbishop. But it is necessary to consider that when the doctrine of modern High-churchmen was unknown it would be

* Kingdom of Christ, p. 217. I have a copy of Archbishop Whately's work which was once owned by the Rev. William Robertson, of Monzuvaire. On the above passage Mr. R. remarks: "Bishop Butler was never baptized. Archbishop Secker was baptized by a Presbyterian. It is admitted by ecclesiastical writers that there is no *record*, no *certainty*, and not much *probability* of the consecration of the following bishops: Downham, of Chester; Stanley, of Sodor; May, of Carlisle; Loyd, of Sodor; Potter, of Carlisle; Forster, of Sodor; Parr, of Sodor; Ferne, of Chester; Rainbow, of Carlisle; Wilkins, of Chester; Bridgewater, of Sodor; Smith, of Carlisle; Strafford, of Chester; Pearson, of Chester;" etc.

absurd to expect any measure to be observed for the preservation of "episcopal succession." The essential principle in the case is *the true source of episcopal powers*. Did the bishop derive his authority from his brethren in office, or from his clerical or civil superior? If he received his office by the gift of the Pope, then the Pope's mandate for his consecration covered all irregularities, and the Roman pallium was a substitute for any and all species of ordination. When the office was the gift of the King, the royal authority only was essential to the bishop. Cranmer, the great leader in the English Reformation, declared that ordination was not essential to the episcopal office.* The observance of a form of consecration was more in keeping with the dignity of the office, but it was not necessary to the discharge of its duties. Hence it was that the ecclesiastical authority proceeding from the King, the royal appointment was the *essence* of the episcopal office. This position can be established beyond cavil.

Let us take the case of Thomas Cranmer as an example. Dr. Field, in his "Book of the Church," says: "Hereunto agree all the best learned amongst the Romanists themselves, freely confessing that that wherein a bishop excelleth a presbyter is not a distinct and higher power of order, but a kind of dignity and office or employment only. Which they prove, because a presbyter ordained *per saltum* that never was consecrated or ordained deacon may notwithstanding do all those acts that pertain to the deacon's order, because the higher order doth always imply in it the

* Irenicum, p. 415; Burnet: Collection of Records, vol. i., part ii., p. 317.

lower and inferior in an eminent and excellent sort. But a bishop ordained *per saltum* that never had the ordination of a presbyter can neither consecrate and administer the sacrament of the Lord's body, nor ordain a presbyter—himself being none—nor do any act peculiarly pertaining to presbyters. Whereby it is most evident that that wherein a bishop excelleth a presbyter is not a distinct power of order, but an eminence and dignity only, specially yielded to one above all the rest of the same rank for order's sake and to preserve the unity and peace of the Church." *

There is scarcely any event in history that can be established more positively than the fact that Cranmer was made an archbishop without having held any see previously, and that *he was never ordained a presbyter or priest* in the Church of Rome. He took the degree of Doctor of Divinity, and was made a divinity lecturer, and he was a fellow of Jesus College, Cambridge. By his first marriage he forfeited his fellowship, but was restored on the death of his wife. He was, however, a married man when he was made archbishop. He hesitated some time before accepting this office, but "he lived in an age," says Le Bas, one of his biographers, "when to decline an office imposed by the sovereign was regarded as an act of almost treasonable contumacy." † Now, the question must be met in the plain, unmistakable words of Dr. Field. The functions of a deacon are included in those of a presbyter, but the consecration of a bishop does not convey the powers of a presbyter. As Cranmer had no ordination as a presbyter, he was not a

* Field: *Of the Church*, b. iii., c. 39. † Le Bas: *Life of Cranmer*, vol. i., p. 54.

true bishop, although consecrated to the office by valid bishops, and appointed thereto by the King. Romanists have alleged that "he was consecrated by no bishop, but thrust in by the King alone." This, however, is disproved by Fuller, who produces the register and gives the names of three bishops who consecrated him.* Cranmer was confirmed by the Pope, and by the practice of that age, and for many years prior to that time, the receipt of the pall from Rome was the visible proof of the divine appointment to the see. He took the oath of allegiance to the Pope, *under protest*, and thus was a canonical bishop, in the Catholic sense, notwithstanding his protest.

"Thus was a private Churchman raised," says Gilpin, "at one step to the first dignity of his profession; and, though the truth of history hath obliged us to confess that he took some steps not quite so direct as might be wished in this hasty advancement, yet we cannot by any means consider him as a man who had formed any settled plans of ambition which he was resolved at all hazards to support; but that, in what he did amiss, he was rather violently borne down by the King's authority."† He was consecrated, says Le Neve, by "papal provision, Bull dated 9 Cal. Mar. (February 22), 1532; consecrated March 30, 1533."‡

But the point at issue is the question, Do all ministerial powers and functions inhere in and belong to the office of a bishop? If so, Cranmer was a canonical bishop in the sense of the High-church theory. But if the order of presbyters possess the powers attributed to them in the Scriptures, he who has only

* Church History of Great Britain, vol. ii., p. 35. † Life of Archbishop Cranmer, p. 27. ‡ Le Neve: *Fasti Ecclesie Anglicanae*, p. 8.

the ordination of a bishop has no ecclesiastical authority to administer the sacraments of the Church. He may be an overseer, a superintendent; but a layman may be also. There is nothing definite in the term "superintendent." It may mean the overseer of a cotton-factory, of a railroad, or of a rolling-mill, as well as of a Church. *Mere oversight defines nothing*; and it is essentially the *looking over*, superintending the affairs of the Church that is involved in the office of bishop as we find it in the New Testament. Unless some specific duties are defined, we cannot attach any meaning to the word "bishop" when it occurs in the early history of the Church. There is nothing more certain than that a bishop in the time of St. Paul was a very different officer from the bishop four centuries later, and this again a different functionary from the bishop of the fifteenth century. The bishop of the second century and the bishop of the Church of England at this hour resembled each other as little as the President of the United States resembles the King of Great Britain.

Thus at the very first link in the English chain of the "apostolical succession" we find a flaw that severs the connection between the ministry of the Reformation and of the present time, and those who handed down the episcopal depositum through the Church of Rome. It is a clergyman of the Church of England who uses these words of equal severity and truth: "On the whole, the conclusion arrived at is as follows: The notion of the intrinsic importance of episcopal succession has originated neither in the Scriptures, in reason, nor in history; but, as far as the officers of the Church are themselves concerned, it has originated in

the love of power and ambition; on the part of the laity in gross ignorance and culpable negligence, in superstition, and more particularly in the vain and imbecile desire of being religious by proxy, of obtaining the privileges, the comforts, and the rewards of Christianity—not through their own, but through the exertions of others; the propensity to attach a vicarious character to Christian ministers which is so utterly inconsistent with the spirit of Christianity. Instead, therefore, of giving the successionists any credit for their agitation of this unscriptural superstition, whatever the motives may be of the present successionists, every true-hearted Churchman must view with alarm and distrust any endeavor to renew that system which occupied so prominent a place in the great spiritual tyranny by which our ancestors were enthralled.”*

* Hints for the Revival of Scriptural Principles in the Anglican Church, by the Rev. George Bird, rector of Cumberworth, p. 64.

Chapter XVI.

Leaving Mr. Wesley's Name off the Minutes—Wesley's Adherence to the Church—No Separation in America—The Methodists Preceded the Episcopalians—The "Obedience Minute"—A Serious Blunder—Disliked by Asbury and Whatcoat—Impracticable and Useless—Purity of Wesley's Motives—Coke Reported to Wesley—Attacks upon Coke in England—His Address to the President Criticized—Mr. Wesley Interested in the Affairs of the Methodist Episcopal Church in America—He Caused Changes which were Attributed to Coke—Debate Concerning Them—Coke Proposes to Abide the Decision—Wesley Appoints R. Whatcoat a Bishop—The Conference Objects to the Claim of Supreme Authority—Whatcoat not Elected—The Repeal of the Minute—Difficult Position of Asbury—A Constitutional Question—A Settlement—Asbury Meets Mr. Wesley's Displeasure—The "Bitter Pill"—Censured for the Fault of Another.

AMONG the events of a disturbing character in the early history of Methodism are two that are intimately connected. "The leaving Mr. Wesley's name off the minutes" and the letter of reproof from Mr. Wesley to Bishop Asbury are worthy of conspicuous places in our Church history. The famous letter, in which the founder of Methodism reproves Asbury for permitting himself to be called a "bishop," has seen yeoman's service in the hands of Protestant Episcopal writers. By piecemeal and as a whole it is to be found in books of all grades and degrees, beginning with the recent effort of Rev. John Alden Spooner and rising to authors of high degree. It is there too to prove that Mr. Wesley never intended to organ-

ize any thing in America on an *independent* footing; certainly not a *Church*, and above all not an *Episcopal Church*.

Mr. Wesley was but human; and while he was as free from the foibles and follies of humanity as any good and great man has ever been known to be, he was not infallible. As he grew older, one of the marked tendencies of his mind was to distrust his own judgment, and to cherish a spirit of abounding charity for the opinions of others. He took no important step in haste, without due consideration. Those who assert that his ordination of Dr. Coke was an act performed from impulse are not competent judges of any action in which their prejudices are involved. He had been considering the subject for nearly forty years. Separation from the Church of England, and the constitution of an independent Church, was a question that agitated the Methodists at the time of the Calvinistic controversy occasioned by Mr. Whitefield and his friends.

To Mr. Wesley's mind, however, there were but two methods by which a man or a society of men could separate from the Church of England. To hold service in England at the same hour with the minister of the parish was to promote separation and to establish an independent Church. This Mr. Charles Wesley did, while John Wesley steadfastly refused to bring his ministrations into competition with those of the Establishment. One other method of separation he held to be refusing to join in the service and to partake of the sacraments. No Methodist in Europe or America having the opportunity refuses at this day to join in the service or to partake of the sacrament of

the Lord's Supper in any Church when there is reason to believe that such communion is desired.

But in America there was no separation in 1784. There could be none where there was no Church from which to separate. Episcopalianism previous to the Revolutionary War had never risen to the dignity of a Church. There was no *legal* jurisdiction, even of the Bishop of London, in any of the colonies. A few zealous men, like Dr. White, of Pennsylvania, were seeking to *organize* a Church. But there were only five ministers in the State besides himself, and by this number of persons he was sent to Canterbury in search of the succession. "The nomination of Dr. Seabury appears to have been a hasty and premature measure, though dictated by the best intentions," says Dr. Hook in his preface to the Life of Bishop Hobart.* The archbishop and bishops in England did not feel warranted in ordaining a man with such a small following, even if no legal restraints existed. But Dr. Seabury was chosen by ten clergymen and indorsed by three others in New York. Dr. White had the suffrages of three clergymen and the indorsement of two others. There were *two* self-sustaining parishes in Philadelphia, and none in Connecticut; and this, doubtless, was in Dr. White's favor. Dr. Seabury's failure furnished those who came after with several important suggestions. The Danish correspondence was a happy incident. It brought the matter before Congress, and by the action of the president of that body the affair took somewhat of a public interest. Governors of States were informed that the United States could have the gospel by the grace of Denmark;

* Preface, p. xvii.

at least episcopally ordained ministers could be had, if not episcopal officers themselves. By urging certain measures before the Legislatures it would be easy to obtain something resembling a legal sanction of episcopacy. The use of a little guile might be overlooked at the beginning of an era of peace. "It was a prudent provision of the convention," says Dr. White, "to instruct the deputies from the respective States to apply to the civil authorities existing in them respectively for their sanction of the measure, in order to avoid one of the impediments which had stood in the way of Bishop Seabury."* Of course this "sanction" was an accommodating term. It was flexible enough to wear the interpretation of a *request* from the civil authorities. The "authorities" had no objection to the importation of bishops for the Episcopal Church, as they had no antipathy to the bishops ordained by the Baptists in Virginia in 1776. If a thing is not objected to, it is sanctioned of course. So that Dr. White and Dr. Provoost went forth with the *sanction* of Pennsylvania and New York. The archbishop and bishops knew nothing about the matter any further, except that, with or without sanction, the expurgated "creed" must be restored.

It was managed with great skill. When the American States were under King George, an English *bishop* for America was a terror to all lovers of religious liberty. But when the American States were a free and independent people, the archbishop and all his suffragans might have moved themselves and their "sees" to the United States. What did a free people care *then* for the tyranny of bishops? The matter was

* Memoirs, p. 114.

ridiculous. And yet Dr. White and his followers are surprised that there should be so much unanimity in sanctioning, when there had been almost equal unanimity in *opposing*, American bishops. These gentlemen could not see that My Lord of London is not precisely the same officer as plain Dr. White of Philadelphia. A bishop clothed with political power in the Legislature differs somewhat from the bishop who has *one vote* at the ballot-box.

By the Methodists there was one ill-advised measure adopted at their organization. It was disliked, and under proper circumstances would have been opposed, by Bishop Asbury. The following question and answer contain the whole subject-matter at issue:

“Q. 2. What can be done in order to the future union of the Methodists? *Ans.* During the life of the Rev. Mr. Wesley we acknowledge ourselves his sons in the gospel, ready in matters belonging to Church government to obey his commands. And we do engage after his death to do every thing that we judge consistent with the cause of religion in America and the political interests of these States to preserve and promote our union with the Methodists in Europe.”*

That was a serious blunder. “I was mute and modest when it passed,” said Mr. Asbury. “I did not think it practical expediency to obey Mr. Wesley at three thousand miles distance in all matters of Church government; neither did Brother Whatcoat nor several others.”† But, having been proposed, it was almost impossible, at that time, to oppose it. Who could do so without the fear of having his motives questioned? Twelve months, two years later, opposi-

* Minutes of 1785. † Asbury's Journal, vol. ii., p. 270.

tion might have been tolerated, and sober reason would have prevailed. But Mr. Wesley had been so accommodating to them—pronouncing them free from all entanglements whatsoever—what could be more natural than one act of real enthusiasm in return for all this kindness? John Wesley wanted no man's money; he sought honor from no man; he desired to have no power over men further than that which began and ended with the soul's welfare. This he sought to advance, but not by laying under tribute the time, property, or conscience of any man.

Within six months of the adjournment of the Christmas Conference, Dr. Coke had returned to Europe and made his report to Mr. Wesley. The famous epigram of Charles Wesley appeared at this time, and furnished one implement of annoyance, if it did no more. The assertion that Charles had not been consulted in the matter of the ordination, and that he knew nothing about it for some time afterward, cannot be reconciled with the facts. He was in Bristol at the time, and although he was not invited to be present, it was for the reason that his brother knew it was useless to argue the question any further. It was not in the power of Charles Wesley to alter the resolution of his brother John. A dozen times, in person and by letter, the subject had been discussed by them, until they had "agreed to disagree."

But the return of Dr. Coke was the occasion for strong and repeated attacks that had a more plausible occasion. In his ordination sermon in Baltimore, Dr. Coke had expressed himself in unqualified terms against the union of Church and State. Being an Englishman and a member of a State Church, this lan-

guage was excepted to, and with at least the appearance of justice. But Dr. Coke explained his meaning to the effect that, while he preferred the Establishment for Great Britain in a mixed monarchy, he thought the principle of voluntary support a far better one for the people of a republic. There is no necessary contradiction in this assertion. There are many Americans who, while they would resist to the last resort an attempt to establish any Church in America, believe, nevertheless, that the State Church of England ought to remain as a venerable institution that has served many good purposes in times past, and has not yet finished its mission. Under the very eye of Mr. Wesley it was charged upon Dr. Coke that he had acted in contradiction to the record and the principles of the Wesleys in organizing an independent Church in America. In answer, Dr. Coke affirmed that he had followed the instructions he had received from Mr. Wesley. Now, if Dr. Coke had misrepresented this venerable man, can any one believe that Mr. Wesley would have remained silent, permitting his intentions to be misconstrued? So far from it, there is positive proof not only that Mr. Wesley approved of what had been done, but that he proceeded to interest himself still further in the management of the American Methodist Church. He accepted the declaration of the Conference of 1784 in good faith that the American preachers were "ready in matters belonging to Church government to obey his commands." Doubtless he thought himself sufficiently acquainted with the wants of the people, and the capacity of some of the preachers at least, to undertake to give direction to their labors. Hence, when Dr. Coke

made his second voyage to America his presence was the occasion for debate, and the discussion ended in several measures of interest. The times of holding the Conferences of 1787 had been changed. The previous year it had been agreed that the first Conference should be held at Salisbury, North Carolina, May 17, 1787; the second at Petersburg, Virginia, June 19, 1787; and the third at Abingdon, Maryland, July 24, 1787. But these Conferences were actually held—the first at Charleston, March 25; the second at William White's, April 19; and the third at Baltimore, May 1.* It will be easily seen that such changes as these would produce confusion and disorder among preachers and people.

Dr. Coke was assailed at once as the cause of these irregularities. "We had some warm and close debates in Conference," says Mr. Asbury under date of May 6, "but all ended in love and peace." The preachers thought he was taking too much authority upon himself, and he had exercised it in a way most certain to produce hardships among all parties concerned. Then it was made known that the changes in the times of the Conferences had been made by Mr. Wesley, and not by Dr. Coke. The following letter from the man whom they had promised to obey produced no little commotion. Under date of September 6, 1786, Mr. Wesley wrote to Dr. Coke: "I desire that you would appoint a General Conference of all our preachers in the United States to meet at Baltimore on May the 1st, 1787; and that Mr. Richard Whatcoat may be appointed superintendent with Mr. Francis Asbury."†

* Vide Asbury's Journal, vol. ii., *passim*. † Etheridge: Life of Coke, p. 223.

In the first place, the preachers were scattered over a section extending more than a thousand miles in a straight line, and comprising a larger territory than that occupied by twenty countries the size of England. To bring these preachers together in a *General Conference* upon such short notice was simply impossible. To do this, moreover, *for the purpose of accepting a bishop appointed by Mr. Wesley*, was a strict construction of their Minute of 1784, it is true, but it would have involved the surrender of the right of self-government, and this they never intended to do.*

Dr. Coke, as the immediate representative of Mr. Wesley, as soon as he was aware of the principles involved, wrote and signed the following declaration:

* In the "Lives of Eminent Methodist Ministers," by the Rev. P. Douglas Gorrie, page 218, is the following statement: "Mr. Whatcoat was an Englishman, an old and valued minister; one too who had been designated three years previously, by Mr. Wesley himself, as a proper person to be selected as a bishop of the Methodist Episcopal Church, and who had even requested his election to that office." There are two errors in this extract—one relating to the date of Mr. Wesley's action, and the other as to the act itself. Mr. Whatcoat was elected bishop in 1800, and Mr. Wesley died in 1791. It was impossible that this recommendation of Mr. Whatcoat could have been given only three years before this General Conference met. The true date is 1786 in which Mr. Wesley designated Mr. Whatcoat as a fit person to be made a bishop. But Mr. Gorrie is in error as to the *character* of the action. Mr. Wesley did not *request* the election of Whatcoat, he *commanded* it. "I desire that Mr. Richard Whatcoat may be appointed superintendent with Mr. Francis Asbury." These are the words of instruction to Dr. Coke, and the bearer of the message, as well as the members of the Conference, understood these words as mandatory. No other construction can be placed upon them; for it was the fact of his issuing the *command* that led to the repeal of the "Obedience Minute." An important constitutional question is at issue, and therefore it is necessary that the error of this excellent historian should be corrected.

I do solemnly engage by this instrument that I never will, by virtue of my office as superintendent of the Methodist Church, during my absence from the United States of America, exercise any government whatever in said Methodist Church. And I do also engage that I will exercise no privilege in the said Church when present except that of ordaining according to the regulations and laws already existing, or hereafter to be made, in said Church, and that of presiding when present in Conference, and lastly that of traveling at large. Given under my hand the second day of May, in the year 1787.

THOMAS COKE.*

It was evident that Dr. Coke could not make the appointments of the preachers with the slender knowledge which he possessed, both of the personnel of the Conferences and the necessities of the people. Bishop Asbury, living among them for nearly twenty years, was qualified for this episcopal work as far as any one man could be at that time. But, in the nature of the case, it was impossible for any man to give entire satisfaction to all parties. Thus the preachers, willing to submit to hardships and even avoidable evils occasioned by Bishop Asbury's errors, were not inclined to yield a similar consent to the appointments of Dr. Coke.

But there was much at stake in this controversy. It was not with Dr. Coke alone that the issue was joined. Mr. Wesley must be informed that, while they had lost no respect for him, and had declined in no particular from the universal desire to work in harmony with him in the Lord's vineyard, yet three thousand miles separated them from him, and that barrier was insuperable. At that distance he could not know, and without knowledge ought not to attempt to govern or direct in the internal affairs of the Church. Moreover, there was a constitutional ques-

* Bangs: History of the M. E. Church, vol. i., p. 258.

tion involved. They were no longer a Society; they were a Church. They possessed ministers, sacraments, forms of government and officers duly elected, and all that belonged to a regularly organized Church of Christ.

It was a delicate duty to select a bishop for this Church. In the first instance they had credited Mr. Wesley's appointment of Dr. Coke, and had elected him purely on the ground of his appointment. But Mr. Asbury they knew, and they elected him because they knew him. He had proved himself a man of prudence, living in the days of the greatest peril in a manner that commanded the respect of all parties. In the days that were the darkest in our history, Francis Asbury never faltered for a moment. Suspected because he was an Englishman by birth, he did not publish his patriotism from the house-tops, but those who knew him most intimately knew that he was a friend to his adopted country.*

Mr. Whatcoat had been in America but a little more than two years. He was an excellent and an able man, but he was comparatively unknown to either the preachers or the people. He might prove to be the right man for the episcopacy, but it was not probable that Mr. Wesley could know the fact. But if he did know it; if it were true, there could be and ought to be no yielding upon this issue. In adopting the Minute of 1784 they did not mean to constitute a dictator to whom unquestioning obedience belonged. They would yield to Mr. Wesley's judgment in regard to any principle of Church government, *but they could not allow him to select their Church officers.*

* E. Cooper's Funeral Discourse, p. 99.

The result was that, on motion of James O'Kelly, the Conference declined to receive the appointment of Richard Whatcoat as a superintendent or bishop of the Methodist Episcopal Church. This is beyond doubt Bishop Asbury's meaning when he says: "Did not J. O'K. set aside the appointment of Richard Whatcoat? and did not the Conference in Baltimore strike that *minute* out of our Discipline which was called a *rejecting of Mr. Wesley?*" *

Here, then, we have the affair of "leaving Mr. Wesley's name off the minutes." The edition of the Discipline of 1785 contains the minute of obedience to Mr. Wesley in matters of Church government. The edition of 1787 omits this minute. But it seems to be extremely difficult to place some of these historical questions in an accurate form before the public. Dr. Etheridge, in his excellent "Life of Dr. Coke," speaking of the substitution of "bishops" for "superintendents," creates the impression that the word "bishops" appeared for the first time in the "Minutes" of 1787. "In accordance with this measure," he says, "there is a manifesto in the American Minutes for 1787 which declares, 'We have constituted ourselves an Episcopal Church under the direction of bishops, elders, deacons, and preachers, according to the form of ordination annexed to our Prayer-book and the regulations laid down in the Form of Discipline.'" †

Now, this statement is not correct. There was nothing corresponding to a "manifesto" in 1787. The Minutes of the "Christmas Conference," 1784-5, after giving Mr. Wesley's letter, proceed as follows: "Therefore, at this Conference, we formed ourselves into an

* Asbury's Journal, vol. ii., p. 270. † Life of Coke, p. 225.

independent Church; and, following the counsel of Mr. John Wesley, who recommended the episcopal mode of Church government, we thought it best to become an Episcopal Church, making the episcopal office elective, and the elected superintendent, *or bishop*, amenable to the body of ministers and preachers."* Nor is this all. In the letter of Mr. Wesley notifying the American brethren of the appointment of Coke and Asbury as "joint *superintendents*," there is in the Minutes an asterisk at the end of the word "superintendents," and these words form a foot-note: "As the translators of our version of the Bible have used the English word *bishop* instead of *superintendent*, it has been thought by us that it would appear more scriptural to adopt their term *bishop*."

Let it be kept in mind that there are *two* printed forms under the name of "Minutes." The first of these is styled, "Minutes taken at the several Annual Conferences of the Methodist Episcopal Church for the year 1785." The second has a lengthy title: "Minutes of several Conversations between Rev. Thomas Coke, LL.D., the Rev. Francis Asbury, and others, at a Conference begun in Baltimore, in the State of Maryland, on Monday, the 27th of December, in the year 1784. Composing a Form of Discipline for the Ministers, Preachers, and other Members of the Methodist Episcopal Church in America. 1785." This last is indeed the book of Discipline in its original form. It contains none of the *minute questions* properly so called; but it does contain the words equivalent to those found in the Discipline, *not* the Minutes of 1787. In order to distinguish them it is

* Minutes for 1787.

proper to call the one the Annual Minutes and the other the Form of Discipline. Now, the Minutes of 1785 give the word "bishop" as the scriptural equivalent for "superintendent," so that it is no afterthought, but the clearly expressed purpose *at the time of the organization of the Church*. But the "Annual Minutes" do not record the first question with the word "bishop" until 1788.

Thus we have arrived at the solution of the question, "What is meant by leaving Mr. Wesley's name off the Minutes?" It is neither more nor less than the act of expunging, in 1787, a statement adopted in 1784 to the effect that the Methodist Episcopal Church in America would obey the commands of Mr. Wesley in regard to Church government. It was an unwise resolution when adopted, and probably its full force and meaning were not understood by those who adopted it. The first proposition to put it in force developed the nature of the resolution and led to its immediate repeal.

But the consequences of this act of repeal were by no means pleasant to one of those who had nothing to do with adopting the measure or with the act of expunging it. Francis Asbury was charged with a variety of motives in bringing about this repeal. It is a humiliating fact that the very man who led the Conference in rejecting the appointment of Mr. Whatcoat as a superintendent, or bishop, endeavored to poison the mind of Mr. Wesley against Bishop Asbury. Nor was James O'Kelly alone in these efforts. Beverly Allen was an unfortunate man, whose early career gave great promise of usefulness. But he came to a sad end. "Poor Beverly Allen!" exclaims Bish-

op Asbury; "he has been going from bad to worse these seven or eight years, speaking against me to preachers and people, and writing to Mr. Wesley and Dr. Coke, and being thereby the source of most mischief that has followed." *

O'Kelly was for nearly ten years in one of the best districts in Virginia—perhaps really the best—"part of the time in the very best circuits," says the Bishop, "and then in the district as presiding elder;" but "I could not settle him for life in the south district of Virginia." † Beverly Allen was a restless, dissatisfied spirit, and seems to have encouraged all parties to make strife and trouble. Bishop Asbury is charged with ambition, and why? "Because I did not establish Mr. Wesley's absolute authority over the American Connection. For myself, this I had submitted to; but the Americans were too jealous to bind themselves to yield to him in all things relative to Church government. Mr. Wesley was a man they had never seen—was three thousand miles off—how might submission in such a case be expected? Brother Coke and myself gave offense to the Connection by enforcing Mr. Wesley's will in some matters; for which I do not blame Mr. Wesley. Like other great men, he had his elbow-friends; and like other people, I had my enemies." ‡

Who Mr. Wesley's "elbow-friends" were, we can only conjecture. But two of Bishop Asbury's enemies we have named. They were men of ability, and the very conditions that surrounded the venerable man gave abundant stimulus to malice, prejudice, and every evil passion. It might be an act of injustice to construe

*Journal, Jan. 20, 1794. †Ibid., July 19, 1798. ‡Ibid., Jan. 25, 1793.

positively some references in Asbury's Journal which seem to indicate the unkind attitude of Thomas Rankin in England. He and Asbury differed at the opening of the war. He left, and Asbury remained in the country. He sunk into comparative oblivion, and Asbury had risen to a fame second only to that of Wesley. But it is not hazarding any thing to say that Mr. Rankin did nothing to defend Asbury when traduced by enemies in America.

Such was the situation of Francis Asbury in 1788, when Mr. Wesley's famous letter was written. That we may have all the light bearing upon this document, the dates of important incidents must be recalled. The "minute of obedience" was passed in December, 1784. It was repealed in May, 1787. Dr. Coke left for Europe on the 27th of May, three weeks after the close of Mr. Wesley's "General Conference." He arrived in Dublin on the 25th of June, in time for the midsummer Wesleyan Conference. Nothing of unusual character is found in any of the Journals during the remainder of the year. It does not appear that Mr. Wesley was offended at the intelligence from America. Perhaps Dr. Coke did not tell him of the "expunging act" passed in Baltimore. But he must have told him that the Conference had refused to accept Mr. Whatcoat as a superintendent. This, however delicate the task, Dr. Coke could not fail to report to Mr. Wesley. But that great man shows no evidence of a wounded spirit for more than *twelve months* after the provocation occurred. Was it because he was "slow to anger?" No; but because he would have taken no personal offense if the American busybodies and tale-bearers had been better employed.

But Beverly Allen's letter came into the field at this juncture. He writes to Coke and Wesley. If the mind of Dr. Coke was a little soured because of the treatment of Mr. Wesley at Baltimore, it would be easy to make him believe that Francis Asbury had prejudiced the minds of the preachers. Jealous of Asbury's influence over their brethren, Allen and O'Kelly would stop at no malicious hint or open charge that would accomplish their purpose. O'Kelly was preparing to measure arms with Asbury. Affecting to defend the interest of the preachers, he demanded the right of appeal from the bishop to the Conference when a preacher was dissatisfied with an appointment. This was in effect to destroy episcopacy and itinerancy at one blow. The occasions for combinations, trades, dissatisfaction, and all evil surmise and all evil enterprise which an appeal to the Conference on such a subject must create, it is scarcely possible to foresee, and impossible to prevent.

Asbury's position was vital to the constitution of the Church, as, at a later period, the attitude of William McKendree was upon a cognate question. Thus, to effect his own purposes, and to establish an aristocracy in Church government, O'Kelly used his utmost powers of persuasion at home and of detraction abroad. Allen's letters were calculated to sow discord between Coke and Asbury. The man who can descend to the position of an informer, even when he has the truth to tell and tells only the truth, feels, if he is an honest man, that he has humbled himself in his own sight, and placed his good name at the mercy of another. The universal feeling of aversion for an "informer" is founded in the work of the Di-

vine Spirit that lays in the human soul this foundation for individual character. He who has whereof to complain of his brother will, first of all, seek to recover his friend by telling him of his fault. But the tale-bearer lives upon the weaknesses and sins of his fellows; and when these do not suffice to maintain his appetite for scandal, he creates the sin that he loves to report.

There was much fuel for such fires as Allen and O'Kelly liked to kindle. Preachers are but men, and most men can be flattered. A local preacher who is not "cultivated" by his pastor; a man whose appointments are always in the backwoods, who ought to be in a "better place;" the man whom the bishop has passed by when he ought to have been selected for responsible and important trusts; the man who could prove himself great if he had the opportunity—these men existed in Asbury's day as they exist in greater number to-day. To sow the seeds of disaffection among these is no great task. If soldiers of the Revolution, in these times of which we write, were won from George Washington by the arts of the political scandal-monger, can it be strange that Asbury should for a time lose some of his once faithful friends? Can it be surprising that these men who sought the ruin of Asbury should begin by enlisting Mr. Wesley in their company?

The subject of greatest wonder is that a combination so powerful accomplished so little. They slandered Asbury, and prevailed upon Wesley to rebuke him. Abusive, anonymous letters came ever and anon, and waited for the weary itinerant at many a wayside home. If hypocrisy be "the homage that vice

pays to virtue," surely the anonymous letter is the phlebotomy which Satan practices to save his servants from apoplexy. Relieved of surplus blood, the patient breathes easier. But the letter of Mr. Wesley, written September 20, 1788, did not reach Bishop Asbury until March 15, 1789. He records the receipt in a line: "Here I received a *bitter pill* from one of my greatest friends. Praise the Lord for my trials also; may they all be sanctified!"* He was holding the South Carolina Conference in Charleston, Dr. Coke being present. The "bitter pill" was as follows:

LONDON, September 20, 1788.

There is indeed a wide difference between the relation wherein you stand to the Americans and the relation wherein I stand to all the Methodists. You are the elder brother of the American Methodists; I am, under God, the father of the whole family. Therefore, I naturally care for you all in a manner no other person can do. Therefore, I in a measure provide for you all. For the supplies which Dr. Coke provides for you, he could not provide were it not for me—were it not that I not only permit him to collect, but also support him in so doing.

But in one point, my dear brother, I am a little afraid, both the Doctor and you differ from me. I study to be little; you study to be great. I creep; you strut along. I found a school; you a college—nay, and call it after your own names! O beware! do not seek to be something. Let me be nothing, and "Christ be all in all."

One instance of this, of your greatness, has given me great concern. How can you, how dare you, suffer yourself to be called bishop? I shudder, I start at the very thought! Men may call me a knave or a fool, a rascal, a scoundrel, and I am content; but they shall never, by my consent, call me bishop. For my sake, for God's sake, for Christ's sake, put a full end to this! Let the Presbyterians do what they please,† but let the Methodists know their calling better.

* March 15, 1789. † Is not this an allusion to the *Baptists* of Virginia, who had made, some ten years before, an experiment in the episcopal form of Church government and called their chief pastors bishops?—W. P. H.

Thus, my dear Franky, I have told you all that is in my heart. And let this, when I am no more seen, bear witness how sincerely I am your affectionate friend and brother,
J. WESLEY.

This was indeed a "bitter pill." "I study to be little; you study to be great. I creep; you strut along." Could it be possible that John Wesley could forget that *his* enemies had said of him precisely what he here affirms of Asbury? And if *they* were false witnesses, might not *his* informants be also? No man who has any respect for truth at this day will say that Francis Asbury was a proud man, exalting himself above his fellows. It is not from the records of his toils and trials as given in his Journal that his portrait should be drawn; but from witnesses of every grade of intellect, of every station in society, of every denomination of Christians, and of none. From these sources we learn how cruelly unjust these words of Mr. Wesley were. Nearly two years after he received this cruel letter he writes to Dr. Coke, February 12, 1791, as follows:

I have served the Church of Christ upward of twenty-five years in Europe and America. All the property I have gained is two old horses, the constant companions of my toil, six if not seven thousand miles every year. Where we have no ferry-boats they swim the rivers. As to clothing, I am nearly the same as at first. Neither have I silver or gold, nor any property. My confidential friends know that I lie not in these matters. I am resolved not to claim any property in the printing concern. Increase as it may, it will be sacred to invalid preachers, the college, and the schools. I would not have *my name* mentioned as doing, having, or being *any thing but dust*.

I soar indeed, but it is over the tops of the highest mountains we have, which may vie with the Alps. I creep sometimes upon, my hands and knees up the slippery ascent; and to serve the Church and the ministers of it, what I gain is many a reflection from both

sides of the Atlantic. I have lived long enough to be loved and hated, to be admired and feared. If it were not for the suspicions of some, and the pride and ignorance of others, I am of opinion I could make provision, by collections, profits on books, and donations in land, to take two thousand children under the best plan of education ever known in this country. The Lord begins to smile on our Kingswood school. One promising young man is gone forth, another is ready, and several have been under awakenings. None so healthy and orderly as our children, and some promise great talents for learning. The obstinate and ignorant oppose among preachers and people, while the judicious for good sense and piety, in Church and State, admire and applaud. I am, with most dutiful respect, as ever, your son in the gospel,

FRANCIS ASBURY.

References to Mr. Wesley's letter are apparent, and they are not out of place. Coke was a witness in part only, for he knew not what occurred in his absence from America. But it shows the power of divine grace in the human heart when Asbury is censured for the fault of Coke and does not explain the fact. It was Coke who wished to call the seminary a "college." It was Coke's name that came first, and that distinguished the title of the place. "I wished only for schools," Asbury says, January 4, 1796; "Dr. Coke wanted a college." But wherein was the "pride" in the matter? William and Mary "College" had been eking out an existence whose character may be estimated by the fact that it rarely had more than *twenty* pupils in any year from its beginning to the war of the Revolution, a period of seventy-five years and more. A "college" is a proper name for a definite thing. It is the abuse of the term "university" that deserves censure in the American States. But the *pièce de résistance* in Wesley's letter, the piece of meat whereof High-churchmen love "to cut and come again," is the allusion to the word "bishop." "How

dare you suffer yourself to be called *bishop*? I shudder, I start at the very thought!" Venerable man! why do you shudder at the word that translates your own claim, expressed over and over again? You are an *episcopos*, and an *episcopos* is a *bishop*. Why, then, start at the word? Alas! there are people who are tickled to the utmost by the application of titles of high-sounding greatness. But there are men too great to be dignified by any title. Cicero is not known as an *emperor*, but as an *orator*. Cæsar is the synonym for greatness, and any title dilutes the power of the name. And thus, by the caricature of the episcopal office, the very name of "bishop" had an ill sound in pious ears in Europe. As an officer of the State Mr. Wesley gave to his diocesan any obedience that was due, but to the *name* he attached no value whatever.

Now and then in some American State where prosperity is just about to dawn, one may see a gowned and surpliced gentleman engaged in scattering pamphlets that ring the changes upon this letter of Mr. Wesley to Francis Asbury. He, the "successor of apostles," now that civilization has produced a little comfort, is prepared to show that the race of the apostles did not die with the exile on Patmos. For any six clergymen of veritable parishes can have an *apostle* created at the general convening-place of the representatives of "the Church." It is not essential that any one should be a *converted* man, from the vestryman, whose zeal is as marvelous as his life is any thing else but religious, to the "apostle" himself, who claims to have the same power in the Church that Christ exercised when on earth. To these agents of

“the Church” this letter of Mr. Wesley has been, and still is, an inexhaustible source of wealth. They print it all; they print it piecemeal; they quote it, and confront some unlettered Methodist with the palpable demonstration that Wesley never dreamed of making Coke and Asbury bishops! It is true that they know better, but the ignorant Methodist does not, and perchance one here and there is captured.

Chapter XVII.

Complaints Against Dr. Coke—Cambrian Blood—An Impulsive Man—Missionary Evangelist and Author—Samuel Drew—Notorious Failure in America—Pragmatism—An Epigram—Bad Advice—James O'Kelly—Mischief in the Air—The Council Fails—General Conference Called—O'Kelly Consents to Abide its Action—Coke Discouraged—Dissensions, Divisions, and Discords—Coke becomes Frightened—Writes to Dr. White proposing to Unite the Methodists and Episcopalians—News of Wesley's Death—Dr. White's Answer—Serious Questions—Cases of Conscience—Bishop Madison proposes to Unite the Episcopalians and the Methodists—In Open Convention the Proposal is Made, and Withdrawn, for Reasons—A Bit of History not Found in Episcopal Tracts.

THE character of Thomas Coke has furnished the enemies of Methodism with not a few arrows of assault, and, as usual, the defense requires more time and space than the charges occupy. It is, indeed, by no means easy to explain all of the sayings and doings of this celebrated man. He had Mr. Wesley's disregard for consistency, and for the same reason. A man that is not wiser to-day than he was yesterday is not the man to give counsel on any subject. The man who sees to-day the error of yesterday, and adheres to it because he is too proud to own himself in the wrong, is not the man to found or to edify Churches or institutions of any kind. But Dr. Coke had what Wesley had not, an impulsive nature that was seldom held in check by superior reason. Wesley was by nature a man of passionate temper, and of vindictive spirit, but grace reversed these native qualities, and patience and meekness adorned his character.

Dr. Coke had much of the Cambrian disposition, which acts first and reasons afterward. His impulses were always good, but the measures he employed were sometimes questionable. He was born to affluence, and gave all he had to the cause of God. He was eminently industrious, and, although his way of life necessarily incurred great expenses, he was seldom or never without some money to give to worthy objects. He has been called ambitious, but his ambition was to do good. He required time to consider whether he could undertake the mission to America; but, once convinced of its propriety, he threw himself upon the current of Providence, and it drifted him to a last, long home in the deep, deep sea; and his name, of all that he had, has been left to the Church and people that he loved. One may censure who does not understand him. The study of his life repays the student, and brings into favorable position those lines of moral feature that seem at first most in shadow.

Coke was an evangelist, a missionary, but he was not qualified for the work of building upon the foundation he had planted. He could see the fields ripening for the harvest, and he spared no effort, no sacrifice in order to send reapers into the field. He was as prompt to act as Peter among the twelve, and for the same reason. His perceptions—often true, and sometimes otherwise—were always followed by action. A calm, philosophic mind, reposing upon its own strength, and capable of meeting any emergency, Dr. Coke had not. Later in life he met such a one in Samuel Drew, and to him much of Coke's literary reputation is due. Drew was a metaphysician who solved some of the deepest mysteries of thought while plying the shoe-maker's needle

and awl. His claims to eminence of soul, as well as of mind, are seen in the fact that, when he was the guest of a wondering circle of gifted men, he was never ashamed of his humble origin. But Thomas Coke had as little thought of appropriating other men's ideas as he had of building upon other men's foundations. Drew was his editor, "to select, arrange, and perfect" * the materials for his books; but Coke was willing to print, and was prevented only by circumstances from printing the name of the shoe-maker side by side with his own.

To do good unto all men, especially those who were cared for by no one else, was the maxim upon which the life of Dr. Coke was ordered. He was the founder of the foreign mission system among the Wesleyans, and his pulpit efforts, his private appeals, and his personal example and melancholy fate, aroused attention to the great work of the Christian Church—the evangelization of the world. To remove from a name so illustrious the stain which prejudice, sectarian zeal, and personal chagrin have united to fasten upon it, is in the truest and best sense a labor of love.

It is necessary to repeat, in order to refute, one of the latest efforts of High-churchmen to defame a man whose life and work they cannot understand. The words of the London reviewer will present one of the charges preferred against Dr. Coke:

"At this crisis the all-sufficient John Wesley intervened as a *deus ex machinâ* to settle the question in the plenitude of his self-created apostolate. Nothing daunted by his own notorious failure in America, he took upon himself, in his bed-chamber at Bristol, on

* Life of Samuel Drew, p. 129.

September 2, 1784, to consecrate one Thomas Coke to the office of 'superintendent,' which in America was promptly translated into bishop. Coke having performed the same ceremony upon Aston, the 'Methodist Episcopal Church' was added to the other sects bubbling in the colonial caldron, and in spite of Charles Wesley's epigram it quickly lost sight of its origin:

'How easily are bishops made,
By man or woman's whim;
Wesley his hands on Coke hath laid,
But who laid hands on him?'

"The shaft penetrated. Dr. Beardsley tells us that after Wesley's death, in 1791, Coke, who was a graduate of Oxford, applied to Bishops Seabury and White to impart the apostolical succession to himself and Aston, and not obtaining his request, returned to England and publicly recanted his schism. (Pp. 310, 311.)"*

The reader has seen some of the issues presented in this extract in the foregoing pages of this volume. The "notorious failure in America" is an evident ebullition of the feeling sometimes called "spleen." John Wesley was a High-churchman when he came to and when he left America. His "failure," if such it be, was due to that cause. The bed-chamber ordination of Coke is matched by the bed-chamber ordination of Seabury a few weeks afterward. The epigram of Charles Wesley is really a good specimen of wit, while the following is a sad illustration of the spirit which actuated the writer in the Review:

Angels, saints, and men are glad
At a prodigal's return;
Envious Pharisees are sad,
With the powers of darkness mourn.

*Church Review, January, 1855.

Scribes, in every age the same,
Thus their *true succession* prove,
By their murmurings proclaim,
"God we neither fear nor love."

These lines of Charles Wesley have been quoted in another place, but they are inserted here in order to balance the poetical account. But what shall be said of the statement that Dr. Coke "recanted his schism," after failing in his application for the "apostolical succession?"

Let us return to the thread of history which we had followed to the year 1789. Bishop Asbury was blamed by Mr. Wesley because he did not use his influence to prevent the act of repealing the "obedience" minute.

"Mr. Wesley blamed me, and was displeased that I did not rather reject the whole Connection, or leave them, if they did not comply. But I could not give up the Connection so easily, after laboring and suffering so many years with and for them."* It must have been a strange tale of "the history and mystery of Methodist Episcopacy" that could have provoked from John Wesley such advice as that. Only the belief that the American preachers had determined to show themselves unworthy of any sacred trust could have induced a proposal inconsistent with every moral obligation on the part of Bishop Asbury. It was not in this spirit that Mr. Wesley received the first intelligence from the "General Conference" of 1787. His Journal has the following entries:

"*Tues.*, 26 [June, 1787].— We were agreeably surprised with the arrival of Dr. Coke, who came from

*Journal, Nov. 29, 1796.

Philadelphia in nine and twenty days, and gave us a pleasing account of the work of God in America.

“*Sat.*, 30.—I desired all our preachers to meet me, and consider the state of our brethren in America, who have been terribly frightened at their own shadow, as if the English preachers were just going to enslave them. I believe that fear is now over, and they are more aware of Satan’s devices.”

It would have been far better if the venerable man had been himself fully aware of Satan’s devices. At the writing of the foregoing entries he was in Ireland, and it was the Irish preachers with whom he held a consultation. Nothing came of it, and no more would have been heard of it, doubtless, but for the evil energy of Allen and O’Kelly. These troublers of Israel were loading the mails with calumny and abuse of Asbury.

Not content with the effect produced in the “bitter pill” administered by Wesley to Asbury, O’Kelly writes to the way-worn Bishop in terms of threatening that appear marvelous to us. “I received a letter,” says Asbury, “from the presiding elder of this district, James O’Kelly. He makes heavy complaints of my power, and bids me stop for one year, or he must use his influence against me. Power! power! There is not a vote given in a Conference in which the presiding elder has not greatly the advantage of me. All the influence I am to gain over a company of young men in a district must be done in three weeks. The greater part of them, perhaps, are seen by me only at Conference, while the presiding elder has had them with him all the year, and has the greatest opportu-

nity of gaining influence. This advantage may be abused. Let the bishops look to it. But who has the power to lay an embargo on me, and to make of none effect the decision of all the Conferences of the Union?" *

The self-sufficient pride which dictated O'Kelly's letter to Asbury was hastening to its fall. A curious experiment in legislation was on trial. To obviate the meeting of the whole body of ministers a council was organized to consist of members from all the Conferences. Of all the inventions of men for the good of society, this was, perhaps, the most inefficient, ill-planned, and ill-starred experiment. It was stoutly opposed in Virginia. "The young men appeared to be entirely under the influence of the elders, and turned it out-of-doors."† It was thought that the influence of Asbury would overpower all others, and that the "council" would be the organ of one man. "To conciliate the minds of our brethren in the south district of Virginia," he writes, "I wrote their leader a letter informing him that I would take my seat in council as another member, and, in that point at least, waive the claims of episcopacy. Yea, I would lie down and be trodden upon rather than knowingly injure one soul."‡

We are approaching a crisis in this controversy. Bishop Asbury has reached Charleston, and on February 23, 1791, we find this record: "Long-looked-for Dr. Coke came to town. He had been shipwrecked off Edisto. I found the Doctor's sentiments with regard to the council quite changed. *James O'Kelly's letters had reached London.* I felt perfectly calm,

*Journal, Jan. 12, 1790. †Ibid., June 14, 1790. ‡Ibid., Aug. 26, 1790.

and acceded to a general conference for the sake of peace."*

It is difficult to believe that Asbury could heartily embrace such a system as the "council" for the government of the Church. But the number of the preachers, in spite of the losses by death, and especially by "location," was rapidly increasing. Seven years after the organization they numbered two hundred and fifty, an increase of threefold. The preachers could not meet together, all of them, in the same place. Some authoritative assembly, selected in some way calculated to give satisfaction, must be devised. What that plan was it required the next century to unfold. For the present the evils are manifest. If the General Conference meets every year it will cost some of the preachers the whole of their salaries and nearly half of their time to attend it. If those from the borders cannot attend, the central stations will, to all intents and purposes, govern the Church. A federal system was needed, and it is strange that the political government did not suggest a plan earlier than the year 1800. It is stranger still that eight years more elapsed before a delegated General Conference prevailed. The first session was held in 1812.

But Dr. Coke had been prejudiced against Bishop Asbury. We shall see the proofs of this fact presently. He had brought with him to America a new source of trouble to the Church. A Mr. Hammet, a man more showy than solid, more brilliant than devout, intended for Nova Scotia, had been driven by ill health from the West Indies, and was now in Charleston. To him many of the Charleston people

*Journal, February 23, 1791.

rallied on the instant, and they would have him for their preacher or none. He became a cause of strife, division, and of shipwreck to some valuable souls.

The aspect of things was threatening. O'Kelly was making a grand rally in Virginia. Men like the sweet-spirited McKendree were captured by the eloquent, warm-hearted, but erratic presiding elder. Perhaps not consciously selfish in the beginning, he had measured arms with Asbury, and intended to conquer or divide the Church. Dr. Coke had neither taste nor skill in controversy. He had listened to the charges against Asbury until his mind was in a state of alarm that incapacitated him for cool, impartial judgment, as well as for judicious, prudent action. On the 5th of March Asbury wrote nearly twenty pages to Coke on the concerns of the Church. Through South Carolina to Georgia, and from Georgia through North Carolina, the two bishops journeyed, sometimes together and sometimes separated.

Dr. Coke did not know how to conduct a controversy, but he knew how to submit to the censure of his brethren. During his third visit to the United States George Washington had been inaugurated President, and Dr. Coke and Francis Asbury, as bishops of the Methodist Episcopal Church, had presented an address, in which there were strong expressions of confidence and esteem. Dr. Coke, as a British subject, could not join in an address of this kind without subjecting himself to the criticism of the English Conference. They gave him a severe but rightly tempered reproof, and he received it in silence and with respectful deference. But the incident was productive of some evil as well as good. A mind like that of

Dr. Coke, finding its best intended actions interpreted for evil, is inclined to doubt its own strength, and under impulse forsakes its conclusions for those less entitled to confidence.

In America, listening from day to day to the charges and insinuations and evil prophecies of many parties, his heart became the victim of the unpropitious circumstances. His courage failed. He had tested the powers of O'Kelly four years before, and knew that he was a man to be feared. On the 5th of April, 1791, Asbury wrote: "I believe trouble is at hand; but I trust God with his cause, and Christ with his Church." Fearful cases of backsliding, even to the pit of darkness itself, aroused the pity and stirred the souls of the brave and the strong, and caused the spirits of the weak and the fearful to fall almost to despair. At the Virginia Conference, in Petersburg, the two bishops rested at different houses. A gloomy, secretive spirit became manifest in Dr. Coke. A Conference had been appointed for Hanover for the 26th of April, 1791. On the 24th Asbury was at Mr. B. Clayton's, but Dr. Coke was in Richmond, and there he wrote his famous letter to Dr. White, of Philadelphia. The minds of the two bishops were greatly disturbed. Dr. Coke, as we shall see in his letter to Dr. White, had almost "despaired of the republic."

Bishop Asbury, April 25, wrote: "I found the Doctor had much changed his sentiments since his last visit to this continent, and that these impressions still continued. I hope to be enabled to give up all I dare for peace sake, and to please all men for their good to edification." The spirit of a true Christian breathes in these words. He who doubted Asbury committed

a great wrong to his own soul, as well as to the Church. He had opinions, and he maintained them, for he had a right to them. But he had no prejudices. He would yield any thing that did not involve serious principle for the sake of peace. The matter of the council was now, by all parties, referred to the General Conference appointed for the next year. What was there to divide Coke and Asbury? Nothing but the malevolence of wicked, ambitious men, and of that there was an abundance. On Sunday Dr. Coke preached in the capitol at Richmond to "the most dressy congregation" he ever saw in America. "Nevertheless they gave great attention while for an hour he argued against the prevailing infidel principles of the age, reasoning with Deists, Socinians, and Arians."*

Was there any law of association that caused this "dressy congregation" to bring the Protestant Episcopal Church to his mind? Did he look upon the cities as the great centers of thought and influence, and from these radiating throughout their respective circles the determining principles of society must come? "Ulcers on the body politic" Jefferson called these large collections of human beings, and he was not far in error in regard to some of them. But here, in the city of Richmond, after the morning sermon to the "dressy congregation," Dr. Coke sat down and wrote hastily to Dr. White, of Philadelphia, as follows:

Right Reverend Sir: Permit me to intrude a little on your time upon a subject of great importance.

You, I believe, are conscious that I was brought up in the Church of England, and have been ordained a presbyter of that Church. For many years I was prejudiced, even, I think, to bigotry, in favor

* Etheridge's *Life of Coke*, p. 274.

of it; but through a variety of causes or incidents, to mention which would be tedious and useless, my mind was exceedingly biased on the other side of the question. In consequence of this I am not sure but I went farther in the separation of our Church in America than Mr. Wesley, from whom I had received my commission, did intend. He did indeed solemnly invest me, as far as he had a right so to do, with episcopal authority, but did not intend, I think, that an entire separation should take place. He, being pressed by our friends on this side of the water for ministers to administer the sacraments to them (there being very few of the clergy of the Church of England then in the States), went farther, I am sure, than he would have gone if he had foreseen some events which followed; and this I am certain of—that he is now sorry for the separation.

But what can be done for a reunion which I much wish for, and to accomplish which Mr. Wesley, I have no doubt, would use his influence to the utmost? The affection of a very considerable number of the preachers and most of the people is very strong toward him, notwithstanding the excessive ill-usage he received from a few. My interest also is not small. Both his and mine would readily, and to the utmost, be used to accomplish that (to us) very desirable object, if a readiness were shown by the bishops of the Protestant Episcopal Church to reunite.

It is even to *your Church* an object of great importance. We have now above sixty thousand adults in our Society in these States, and about two hundred and fifty traveling ministers and preachers, besides a great number of local preachers, very far exceeding the number of traveling preachers, and some of those local preachers are men of very considerable abilities. But if we number the Methodists as most people number the members of their Church—viz., by the families which constantly attend the divine ordinances in their places of worship—they will make a larger body than you probably conceive. The Society, I believe, may be safely multiplied by five, on an average, to give us our stated congregations, which will then amount to three hundred thousand; and if the calculation which, I think, some eminent writers have made be just, that three-fifths of mankind are un-adult (if I may use the expression) at any given period, it will follow that all the families, the adults of which form our congregations in these States, amount to seven hundred and fifty thousand. About one-fifth of these are blacks. The work now extends in length from Boston to the south of Georgia, and in breadth

from the Atlantic to Lake Champlain, Vermont, Albany, Redstone, Holstein, Kentucky, Cumberland, etc.

But there are many hinderances in the way. Can they be removed?

1. Our ordained ministers will not, ought not to give up their right of administering the sacraments. I do not think that the generality of them, perhaps none of them, would refuse to submit to a reordination if other hinderances were removed out of the way. I must here observe that between sixty and seventy only out of the two hundred and fifty have been ordained presbyters, and about sixty deacons (only). The presbyters are the choicest of the whole.

2. The other preachers would hardly submit to a reunion if the possibility of their rising up to ordination depended on the present bishops in America, because, though they are *all*, I think I may say, zealous, pious, and useful men, yet they are not acquainted with the learned languages. Besides, they would argue, if the present bishops would waive the article of the learned languages, yet their successors might not.

My desire of a reunion is so sincere and earnest that these difficulties almost make me tremble, and yet something must be done before the death of Mr. Wesley, otherwise I shall despair of success; for though my influence among the Methodists in these States, as well as in Europe, is, I doubt not, increasing, yet Mr. Asbury, whose influence is very capital, will not easily comply; nay, I know he will be exceedingly averse to it.

In Europe, where some steps have been taken tending to a separation, all is at an end. Mr. Wesley is a determined enemy of it, and I have lately borne an open and successful testimony against it.

Shall I be favored with a private interview with you in Philadelphia? I shall be there, God willing, on Tuesday, the 17th of May. If this be agreeable I will beg of you just to signify it in a note directed to me at Mr. Jacob Baker's, merchant, Market street, Philadelphia; or, if you please, by a few lines sent me by the return of the post at Philip Roger's, Esq., in Baltimore, from yourself or Dr. Magaw, and I will wait upon you with my friend Dr. Magaw. We can then enlarge on these subjects.

I am conscious of it that secrecy is of great importance in the present state of the business, till the minds of you, your brother

bishops, and Mr. Wesley be circumstantially known. I must therefore beg that these things be confined to yourself and Dr. Magaw till I have the honor of seeing you.

Thus, you see, I have made a bold venture on your honor and candor, and have opened my whole heart to you on the subject, as far as the extent of a small letter will allow me. If you put equal confidence in me, you will find me candid and faithful.

I have, notwithstanding, been guilty of inadvertences. Very lately I found myself obliged (for the pacifying of my conscience) to write a penitential letter to the Rev. Mr. Jarratt, which gave him great satisfaction, and for the same reason I must write another to the Rev. Mr. Pettigrew. When I was last in America I prepared and corrected a great variety of things for our magazines; indeed, almost every thing that was printed, except some loose hints which I had taken of one of my journeys, and which I left in my hurry with Mr. Asbury without any correction, entreating that no part of them might be printed which would be improper or offensive. But through great inadvertency (I suppose) he suffered some reflections on the character of the two above-mentioned gentlemen to be inserted in the magazine, for which I am very sorry, and probably shall not rest till I have made my acknowledgment more public, though Mr. Jarratt does not desire it.

I am not sure whether I have not also offended you, sir, by accepting one of the offers made me by you and Dr. Magaw of the use of your churches about six years ago on my first visit to Philadelphia without informing you of our plan of separation from the Church of England. If I did offend (as I doubt not I did, especially from what you said on the subject to Mr. Richard Dellam, of Abingdon), I sincerely beg yours and Dr. Magaw's pardon. I will endeavor to amend. But alas! I am a frail, weak creature.

I will intrude no longer at present. One thing only I will claim from your candor—that if you have no thoughts of improving this proposal you will burn this letter and take no more notice of it (for it would be a pity to have us entirely alienated from each other, if we cannot unite in the manner my ardent wishes desire). But if you will further negotiate the business I will explain my mind still more fully to you on the probabilities of success.

In the meantime permit me, with great respect, to subscribe myself, right reverend sir, your very humble servant in Christ,

THOMAS COKE.

You must excuse interlineations, etc., as I am just going into the country, and have no time to transcribe.

Richmond, April 24, 1791.

The Right Reverend Father in God, BISHOP WHITE.

Dr. Coke was going into the country to attend the Conference and to meet Bishop Asbury, and the next day—Monday, April 25—the entry was made in the Journal, which expressed the belief of a decided change in Dr. Coke, and a willingness upon the part of Asbury to make any concession for the sake of peace. They closed the Conference hastily, and on Thursday, April 28, Dr. Coke preached at Port Royal. The next day, April 29, news was received of the death of John Wesley. He died on the 2d of March, and the news had been no less than *fifty-eight* days in reaching them!

This intelligence filled the soul and mind of Dr. Coke. If he had entertained fears for the perpetuity of the Church beforetime, he was now, as he supposed, called to look another important fact in the face. He had no doubt of his election to the presidency of the British Conference, perhaps to be a permanent president with something analogous to episcopal power. He had, as he supposed, reason to believe that Mr. Wesley would have made some such arrangement, if required to do so by the exigences of the case. If this should happen, what must be the fate of America? Divided, wrangling, split into parties fiercely devouring each other, he saw in his imagination the young American Church dissolving like a dream, and fulfilling the gloomy prophecy of Charles Wesley: "They will lose all their influence and importance, they will turn aside to vain janglings, they will settle again up-

on their loes, and, like other sects of dissenters, come to nothing!"*

Can we find it in our hearts to censure Dr. Coke very severely, when we know that such a man as Thomas Jefferson was seized by a political panic somewhat analogous in its origin? When it was proposed to establish the Society of the Cincinnati as a permanent institution, Thomas Jefferson wrote a letter to Gen. Washington, which is, to say the least of it, a strange production for a man who had the strongest confidence in the self-governing capacity of a free people. "The moderation and virtue of a single character," said Jefferson, in 1784, "have probably prevented this Revolution from being closed, as most others have been, by a subversion of that liberty it was intended to establish. He is not immortal, and his successor, or some of his successors, may be led by false calculation into a less certain road to glory."†

If Thomas Jefferson, the author of the immortal Declaration of Independence, could see certain danger in the existence of a society that was composed of the men who purchased American liberty by their heroism, why should we blame Dr. Coke for entertaining the gloomy forebodings which prompted him to write the letter to Dr. White? And now that the founder of Methodism is no more, he remembers the words of Charles Wesley, and the suggestion leads him to address another letter to Dr. Seabury, who had been exceedingly willing to give the "apostolical succession" to any properly recommended Methodist brother who might apply.

* Life of Charles Wesley, p. 423. †Jefferson's Correspondence, vol. i., p. 225.

Let us deal tenderly with Dr. Coke. But, before we examine the letter to Dr. Seabury, it will be proper to introduce Dr. White's reply to the communication addressed to him. The "Fac-similes of Church Documents" contain Dr. Coke's letters to White and Seabury, but, upon the principle, perhaps, that White's reply is of "no consequence," it is not copied. The Philadelphia divine has preserved his answer to Dr. Coke, but it bears no date:

Reverend Sir: My friend, Dr. Magaw, has this day put into my hands your letter of the 24th of April, which, I trust, I received with a sense of the importance of the subject, and of the answer I am to give to God for the improvement of my opportunity of building up his Church. Accordingly I cannot but make choice of the earliest of the two ways you point out to inform you that I shall be very happy in the opportunity of conversing with you at the time proposed.

You mention two difficulties in the way of the proposed union, and there are further difficulties which suggest themselves to my mind; but I can say of the one and of the other that I do not think them insuperable, provided there be a conciliatory disposition on both sides. So far as I am concerned, I think that such a disposition exists.

It has been my temper, sir, not to despond in regard to the extension of Christianity in this new world; and in addition to the promises of the Great Head of the Church, I have always imagined that I perceived the train of second causes so laid by the good providence of God, as to be promoting what we believe to be his will in this respect. On the other hand, I feel the weight of most powerful discouragement in the increasing number of the avowed patrons of infidelity, and of others who pretend to confess the divine authority of our holy religion, while they endeavor to strip it of its characteristic doctrines. In this situation it is rather to be expected that distinct Churches, agreeing in fundamentals, should make mutual sacrifices for a union than that any Church should divide into two bodies without a difference being even alleged to exist in any leading point. For the preventing of this, the measures which you may propose cannot fail of success, unless there be on one side, or on both, a most lamentable deficiency of Christian temper.

I remember the conversation you allude to with Mr. Dellam. I hope I did not express myself uncharitably or even indelicately. As to personal offense toward me, it is out of the question, for I had not at that time any connection with St. Paul's Church. But this, as well as the other parts of your letter, may be discoursed of at the proposed interview. Therefore, with assurance of the desired secrecy, and with requesting you to accept a like promise of candor to that which I credit from you, I conclude myself at present your brother in Christ and very humble servant,

W W.

Let it be noted how readily Dr. White entered into Dr. Coke's plan. That the Episcopal bishop was favorable to the proposed union on Dr. Coke's terms is the only escape for Dr. White. If he was not in favor of this union, he acted in the most unpardonable manner in not burning Dr. Coke's *confidential* letter. The appeal is to a man of honor: "One thing only I will claim from your candor—*that if you have no thoughts of improving this proposal, you will burn this letter, and take no more notice of it.*" In his *Memoirs* Dr. White says: "Dr. Coke's letter was answered by the author with the reserve which seemed incumbent on one who was incompetent to decide with effect on the proposal made."* With this statement compare these words from Dr. White's reply: "In this situation it is rather to be expected that distinct Churches, agreeing in fundamentals, should make mutual sacrifices for a union than that any Church should divide into two bodies without a difference being even alleged to exist in any leading point. For the preventing of this, *the measures which you may propose cannot fail of success, unless there be on one side, or on both, a most lamentable deficiency of Christian temper.*"

Are these words of "reserve?" Two Churches ought

* *Memoirs*, p. 197.

to make sacrifices for union, even if they had been formerly distinct. But "two bodies," formed out of one Church, having no difference of doctrine to divide them, ought the more readily to unite. Let us note the fact that if the Episcopal sect was a *Church*, so was the Methodist. If the Methodist denomination was only a "body," so also was the Episcopalian. And Dr. White is so confident that Coke's measures are feasible, practicable, desirable, that nothing can defeat them but "a lamentable deficiency of Christian temper!" But, when he came to record the transaction afterward, the terms are, "a union of the *Methodistical Society* with the Episcopal Church!"*

The fox and the sour grapes—how often do they play their instructive parts in this world of sin and folly!

"It was evident from some expressions which passed in conversation with Dr. Coke," says Dr. White, "that there was a degree of jealousy, if not of misunderstanding, between him and Mr. Asbury. Whether this had any influence in the enterprise of the former, or he perceived advantage likely to arise to him under the state of things which would take place in England on the decease of Mr. Wesley, are questions on which there is no judgment here formed."†

The fair-minded reader will add to this last sentence that these are questions which would not arise in the mind of a Christian gentleman to whom a friend had unbosomed himself. Alas for Dr. Coke! Fondly dreaming that he was placing his most secret thoughts in the possession of a man of honor, he reveals them to one who does not scorn to hold his words, his

* *Memoirs*, p. 197. † *Ibid.*, p. 199.

actions, and his very tones of voice in vivid memory, that in after days he may use these betrayals of friendship to stab the cause for which Coke lived, labored, and died!

"The determination was adopted not to hinder any good which might possibly accrue hereafter, although it was perceived that this could not be on the terms proposed."*

Let us weigh every word of the foregoing sentence, and interpret it in the light of events following. The author of the "Memoirs" determined "not to hinder any good that might possibly accrue hereafter." That means to preserve Coke's letter for such use as fortune may present. It was perceived, however, that no "good" could be accomplished on the terms proposed; therefore he wrote to Dr. Coke that this good—a union of the two Churches—not only *could* be accomplished on "the terms proposed," but if this were not done the fault would be owing to a "lamentable want of Christian temper!" Finally, on this ground that he was favorable to Coke's proposition, he *preserved* the letter, instead of *burning* it, as Coke had appealed to him to do if he did not favor his proposition. The reader will judge of the *morality* of this transaction, and give to each actor in it the censure that belongs to him.

How differently are questions of honor construed by men! It is not necessary to say that a *Christian* man would not condescend to make a public use of the materials which confiding friendship has placed in his hands under the seal of secrecy. Dr. Coke's views upon that subject were made manifest by an incident

* Memoirs, p. 199.

which occurred some years after his letters to Drs. White and Seabury. Immediately after Mr. Wesley's death a pamphlet professing to review his life and character appeared in London. It was written with a great deal of skill, and in a literary point of view excelled the average publications of the day. In this production Mr. Wesley's good name was smirched in many ways, but especially by two love-letters said to be addressed by him to a young lady when he was more than eighty years of age. "The letters were written in a peculiar strain of canting gallantry," says Mr. Drew.* The writer who gave them to the press advertised that he had the original letters, and the public could see them by calling at a certain place. Many persons did so, but no one could see the letters. Excuses of one kind or another intervened, and thus the matter passed out of the public mind, until ten years after the publication, when Dr. Coke received a note from a Mr. Collet, confessing that the letters were forgeries of his own, and the whole pamphlet a collection of falsehoods. The forger not only confessed his crime, but authorized Dr. Coke to make his confession public. Here was a case in which the liberty to use a private communication was expressly given, and yet Dr. Coke did not publish the criminal's confession until he had the written authority of Collet to do so. Justice required the publication, but Mr. Collet had placed his reputation in Dr. Coke's hands, and he would not use his own statement to his damage without the specific authority of the writer.

As for Dr. Coke, we need not repel the insinuation of a jealous feeling for Bishop Asbury. It was as far

* Life of Coke, p. 309.

from him as an ungenerous action was from the soul of either. There was no room for rivalry between these men. One was domiciled in America, the other in Europe. One was fast gathering into his hands the cords of a vast system, a network of missionary operations destined to touch and thread every country on the globe. The other was busy with the toils and labors, the triumphs and trials of a vast field of domestic operations, and sending to the outposts of civilization the messengers of the cross. By the time the winding-horn of the pioneer hunter had broken the silence of the forest, the voice of song, pealing forth the glorious hymns of Charles Wesley, answered the echo. The ax of the woodman had scarcely cut the timbers for his cabin before the heralds of the cross brought to his door the gospel of life and liberty from sin. The objects were the same, but the lines of action were as far apart from each other as the shores of the Atlantic Ocean.

That Dr. Coke had fears of the consequences of Mr. Wesley's death, both in Europe and America, is beyond question. The disturbed condition of the American Church, occasioned by O'Kelly and his coadjutors, led him to seek from any proper source the means of reënforcing the Church and widening the field of its operations. If this was not a proper motive, what shall be said of Bishop Madison's proposition to unite the Episcopalians and the Methodists? Our High-church advocates are not accustomed to refer to the fact that Bishop Madison proposed to do what Dr. White declared subsequently could not be done—that is, to make a compromise of Episcopal prejudices in things not essential, that the Methodists

might unite with them in forming a Church of greater strength than either possessed separately.

Dr. James Madison became the bishop of the diocese of Virginia in 1791. The convention of that year had twenty-eight ministers present, a larger number than the records show at any convention in the next twenty years. A long and able address was delivered by the Bishop. It is full of lamentations over the state of the Church in the diocese. He deplors the want of Christian zeal, the indifference of the laity, the unfaithfulness of the clergy; and in an address two years later he uttered the most withering reproach that could be framed in moderate language. "Many educated in the bosom of our Church desert it," says Bishop Madison, "not solely from a conviction of error in doctrine, but because the great bulk of its members seem indifferent to religious exercises." *

A Church "indifferent to religious exercises!" What a singular picture is given of the Protestant Episcopal Church by its own friends! Dr. White says that if it had been required to accept none but *communicants* in the conventions which organized the Church, it could not have been organized at all.† One of the most extraordinary statements ever made by a minister of the gospel is made by Dr. White when he said that "the Church" had no method of *receiving* members into her communion! In New Jersey "considerable difficulty was alleged to have arisen," he says, "as to what may be called a joint act in the case of a person baptized in some other communion, but joining his or herself to this Church. In the case supposed the joint

*Journals of Conventions, p. 57. † Memoirs, p. 297.

act must have been of the person and of the minister recording his name.”* The “joint act” of joining the Church! The question, How shall I proceed to take a member into the Church? is answered in this luminous style: “By bringing the matter to the test of whatever was considered by both of the parties as tending to the effect contemplated.” Surely Dr. White’s instructions must have furnished employment for many of the far-famed “Philadelphia lawyers,” whose skill in abstruse and “circumvented rhetoric” must have been taxed by this diplomatic style of composition. “It must be confessed, however,” says Dr. White, “that this manifests an imperfect state of discipline.”† A few Methodist preachers would have relieved “the clergy” of this distressing embarrassment by the simplest of means—conformity to the word of God.

Bishop Madison’s proposition to unite with the Methodist Episcopal Church was made in the General Convention of 1792. The document is not without interest in this connection:

“The Protestant Episcopal Church of the United States of America, ever bearing in mind the sacred obligation which attends all the followers of Christ, to avoid divisions among themselves, and anxious to promote that union for which our Lord and Saviour so earnestly prayed, do hereby declare to the Christian world that, uninfluenced by any other considerations than those of duty as Christians, and an earnest desire for the prosperity of pure Christianity and the furtherance of our holy religion, they are ready and willing to unite and form one body with any religious so-

* *Memoirs*, p. 258. † *Ibid*.

ciety which shall be influenced by the same catholic spirit. And in order that this Christian end may be the more easily effected, they further declare that all things in which the great essentials of Christianity or the characteristic principles of their Church are not concerned they are willing to leave to future discussion, being ready to alter or modify those points which, in the opinion of the Protestant Episcopal Church, are subject to human alteration. And it is hereby recommended to the State Conventions to adopt such measures, or propose such conferences with Christians of other denominations, as to themselves may be thought most prudent, and report accordingly to the ensuing General Convention."*

"On the reading of this in the House of Clerical and Lay Deputies, they were astonished, and considered it altogether preposterous," says Dr. White, "*tending to produce distrust of the stability of the system of the Episcopal Church, without the least prospect of embracing any other religious body. The members generally mentioned, as a matter of indulgence, that they would permit the withdrawing of the paper, no notice to be taken of it. A few gentlemen, however, who had got some slight intimations of the correspondence between Dr. Coke and the author, who would have been gratified by an accommodation with the Methodists, and who thought that the paper sent was a step in measures to be taken to that effect, spoke in favor of the proposition; but it was not to be endured, and the bishops silently withdrew it, agreeably to leave given.*"†

This story never appears in Episcopal tracts. It is

* *Mem. etc.*, p. 195. † *Ibid.*, p. 196.

never seen in "A Methodist in Search of the Church," or "Looking for the Church," or any other of that prolific family of proselyting books. But it is a part of the history of the Protestant Episcopal Church. Nor did Bishop Madison cease his efforts because he was "permitted to withdraw" this "preposterous" proposition. He renewed the subject in the next convention of his diocese, bringing it formally before the body in his annual address. He called for information from persons present, if they had any, tending to the conclusion that the difficulties in the way of such a union could be removed. Everybody knew that none but Methodists could be referred to in these propositions, and they were made by Bishop Madison *before he had one word of information concerning the letter of Dr. Coke, and before he knew that such a letter had been written.* That there was a "distrust of the stability of the system of the Protestant Episcopal Church" in the mind of Bishop Madison, is more than probable, for he was a sad spectator of a waning interest in his Church in his own diocese. In 1794 eleven ministers only appeared in convention. The Journals of 1795 are lost. A slight rally occurs in 1796; a decline in 1797; no Journal for 1798; fifteen clergymen in 1799, and a pathetic address from the bishop. Then follow from the pen of the editor these significant words: "From the best information which the author has been able to collect, the depressed condition of the Church led to the entire discontinuance of the conventional meetings for several years. There will, therefore, be found irregularity in the Journals from this period up to 1812."* In point of fact,

*Journals of Virginia Conventions, p. 83.

from 1799 to 1812 it appears from the record that only *one* convention was held, and that a *special* one, in 1805. No wonder that Bishop Madison had "very much at heart" a union with the Methodist Episcopal Church!

Is it not as clear as the noonday that Dr. Coke's proposition made no overture to the Episcopalians that was not expressed in Bishop Madison's approach to the Methodists? Neither proposed to sacrifice any essential principle, the difference in the proposals being, in the first instance, the sudden, impulsive enterprise of a man whose judgment was at fault, and, in the second instance, the well-considered and often repeated measure of the Episcopal bishop, who saw the elements of indifference and worldliness producing the most direful results in his Church. If, then, Dr. Coke's letter contained a surrender to the "apostolical succession," Bishop Madison's proposal placed the "successors of the apostles" in the power of a Methodist Conference.

Chapter XVIII.

Dr. Coke's Letter to Dr. Seabury—Misrepresentations in Beardsley's Life of Seabury—Statements not Sustained—Coke's Letter of Explanation—Dr. Coke did not Publish a Retraction of His Action in Organizing the Methodist Episcopal Church—Injurious Turn Given to Innocent Expressions—The Attempt at Separation which he Retracted was in Europe, not in America—A Nest of Errors—Separation Again Defined—What Dr. Coke Did—He Explains His Own Words—Ordination not Necessarily by Laying on of Hands—Romanist Orders—No Episcopacy by Divine Right—Dr. Milner—A Favorite Authority of the Bishop of Oxford.

RESUMING the thread of this narrative, we observe Dr. Coke on his way to New York, and thence to England. In Baltimore, on Sunday, May 1, 1791, he preached a funeral-discourse in memory of Mr. Wesley, "and mentioned some things that gave offense," says Bishop Asbury. "Having taken a seat in the mail-coach," says Mr. Drew, "Dr. Coke departed from Baltimore very early on Monday morning, but was somewhat indisposed during the day. The following morning when he attempted to rise he found himself totally unable to proceed." * His illness prevented him from reaching New York in time for the packet-ship, and he proceeded to Philadelphia, where he remained nine days. It was during this time that he received Dr. White's answer to his letter, and here he had several conversations with that gentleman. On the 14th of May he left Philadelphia for Newcastle, where a ship was ready to sail for London.

* Drew's Life of Coke, p. 232.

Before he left, he wrote the following letter to Dr. Samuel Seabury:

Right Reverend Sir: From your well-known character I am going to open my mind to you on a subject of very great moment.

Being educated a member of the Church of England from my earliest infancy, being ordained of that Church, and having taken two degrees in arts and two degrees in civil law in the University of Oxford, which is entirely under the patronage of the Church of England, I was almost a bigot in its favor when I first joined that great and good man Mr. John Wesley, which is fourteen years ago. For five or six years after my union with Mr. Wesley I remained fixed in my attachment to the Church of England; but afterward, for many reasons which it would be tedious and useless to mention, I changed my sentiments, and promoted a separation from it as far as my influence reached. Within these two years I am come back again; my love for the Church of England has returned. I think I am attached to it on a ground much more rational—and consequently much less likely to be shaken—than formerly. I have many a time run into error; but to be ashamed of confessing my error when convinced of it has never been one of my defects. Therefore, when I was fully convinced of my error in the steps I took to bring about a separation from the Church of England in Europe, I delivered, before a congregation of about three thousand people in our largest chapel in Dublin, on a Sunday evening after preaching, an exhortation, which in fact amounted to a recantation of my error. Some time afterward I repeated the same in our largest chapels in London and in several other parts of England and Ireland, and I have reason to believe that my proceedings in this respect have given a death-blow to all the hopes of a separation which may exist in the minds of any in those kingdoms.

On the same principles I most cordially wish for a reunion of the Protestant Episcopal and Methodist Churches in these States. The object is of vast magnitude. Our work now reaches to Boston, northward; to Wilkes county, in Georgia, southward; to Albany, Vermont, and Lake Champlain, Redstone, and Kentucky, westward—a length of about one thousand three hundred or one thousand four hundred miles, and a breadth of between five hundred and one thousand. Our Society in the States amounts to upward of sixty thousand. These, I am persuaded, may with safety be multiplied

by five to give us our regular Sunday's congregations, which will make three hundred thousand. If the calculations of some great writers be just, three-fifths of any given country consists of *unadults*. So that the families, the adults of which regularly attend divine service among us, amount, according to this mode of calculation, to seven hundred and fifty thousand. About a fifth part of these are blacks. How great, then, would be the strength of our Church (will you give me leave to call it so?—I mean the Protestant Episcopal) if the two sticks were made one?

But how can this be done? The magnitude of the object would justify *considerable sacrifices*. A solemn engagement to use *your* prayer-book in all our places of worship on the Lord's-day would of course be a *sine quâ non*—a concession we should be obliged to make on our part (if it may be called a concession); and there would be, I doubt not, other concessions to be made by us. But what concession would it be necessary for you to make? For the opening of this subject with all possible candor, it will be necessary to take a view of the present state of the ministry in the Methodist Church in these States.

We have about two hundred and fifty traveling preachers, and a vastly greater number of local preachers—I mean preachers who live on their plantations or are occupied in the exercise of trades or professions and confined to a small sphere of action in respect to their ministerial labors. About seventy of our traveling preachers are elders (as we call them), or presbyters. These are the most eminent and most approved of the whole body, and a very excellent set of clergy I really believe they are. We have about the same number of deacons among the traveling preachers, who exercise the office of deacon according to the plan of the Church of England. These ministers, both presbyters and deacons, must be elected by a majority of the Conference before they can be ordained. A superintendent *only* ordains the deacons; and the superintendent must make one of the presbytery for the ordination of a priest, or elder; and the superintendents are invested with a negative voice in respect to the ordination of any person that has been elected for the office either of elder or deacon. Among the local preachers there is no higher office than that of a deacon. The local preacher does not pass through an election for this office; but if he bring a testimonial signed by three elders (one of whom must be what we call a presiding elder, one who has the government of a district—

i. e., several circuits joined together), three deacons, three unordained preachers, and the majority of the class of which he is a member (or the stewards and leaders of the whole society of which he is a member), a superintendent may then, if he please, ordain him; and a great many of the oldest and wisest of the local preachers have been ordained deacons on this plan.

Now, on a reunion's taking place, our ministers—both elders and deacons—would expect to have, and ought to have, the same authority they have at present of administering the ordinances according to the respective powers already vested in them. For this purpose I well know they must submit to a reordination, which I believe might be easily brought about if every other hinderance was removed out of the way. But the grand objection would arise from *the want of confidence* which the deacons and unordained preachers would experience. The present bishops might give them such assurances as would perhaps remove all their fears concerning *them*. But they could give no security for their successors, or for any new bishops who may be consecrated for the Episcopal Church in those States which have not at present an Episcopal minister. The requisition of *learning* for the ministry (I mean the knowledge of the New Testament in the original and of the Latin tongue) would be an insuperable objection on this ground, as the present bishops and the present members of the general convention can give no *sufficient* security for their successors; and the preachers could never, I believe, be induced to give up the *full* confidence they have in their present superintendents, that they shall in due time rise to the higher offices of the Church according to their respective merits, for any change of situation in which the confidence they should then possess would not be equivalent. But what can be done to gain this confidence on the plan of a reunion of the two Churches? I will answer this important question with all simplicity, plainness, and boldness; and the more so because, first, I am addressing myself, I have no doubt, to a person of perfect candor; secondly, I have a reunion so much at heart that I would omit nothing that may, according to the best of my judgment, throw light on the subject; and thirdly, because I think I am not in danger from your charitable spirit to be suspected in the present instance of pressing after worldly honor, as it is probable I shall be elected president of the European Methodists, and shall not, I believe, receive greater marks of respect from the Methodists in these States—supposing I ever be a bishop

of the Protestant Episcopal Church—than they are at present so kind as to show me. Mr. Asbury, our resident superintendent, is a great and good man. He possesses—and justly—the esteem of most of the preachers and most of the people. Now, if the general convention of the clergy consented that he should be consecrated a bishop of the Methodist Episcopal Church on the supposition of a reunion, a very capital hinderance would be removed out of the way.

Again, I love the Methodists in America, and could not think of leaving them entirely, whatever might happen to me in Europe. The preachers and people also love me. Many of them have a peculiar regard for me. But I could not *with propriety* visit the American Methodists possessing in our Church on this side of the water an office inferior to that of Mr. Asbury. But if the two houses of the convention of the clergy would consent to the consecration of Mr. Asbury and me as bishops of the Methodist Society in the Protestant Episcopal Church in these United States, or by any other title, if that be not proper, on the supposition of the reunion of the two Churches under proper mutual stipulations, and engage that the Methodist Society shall have a regular supply on the death of their bishops, and so *ad perpetuum*, the grand difficulty in respect to the preachers would be removed; they would have the same men to confide in whom they have at present, and all other mutual stipulations would soon be settled. I said *in respect to the preachers*, for I do not fully know Mr. Asbury's mind on the subject. I have my fears in respect to his sentiments; and if he do not accede to the union, it will not take place so completely as I could wish. I wish you could see my sinful heart; but that is impossible.

I think I need not observe that if things were brought to a happy issue we should still expect to enjoy all our rights as a *Society* in the most exclusive sense, as we do now in Europe. I mean the receiving or rejecting members in or from our classes, bands, love-feasts, etc.

I have had the honor of three interviews with Bishop White on this subject, and some correspondence. In the present state of things I must entreat the favor of you to lay this business only before your confidential friends. And if you honor me with a letter by the June packet, directed to the Rev. Dr. Coke, at the new chapel, City Road, London, I will write to you again immediately after the English Conference, which will commence in Manchester the last Tuesday in next July.

The importance of the subject on which I have now written to you will, I think, prevent the necessity of an apology for the liberty I have taken in writing to you. Permit me to subscribe myself, with great respect, right reverend sir, your very humble and obedient servant,

THOMAS COKE.

Philadelphia, May 14, 1791.

The Right Reverend Father in God, BISHOP SEABURY.

It is remarkable that no mention is made of Mr. Wesley's death in this letter. The only sentence that can be construed into a reference to that event is the writer's expectation of being elected "president of the European Methodists," an expectation that was not verified. In the supercilious style so frequently practiced by the pretended "successors of the apostles" in this country, Dr. E. Edward Beardsley, author of the "*Life of Samuel Seabury*," says: "Dr. Coke evidently felt that he was merely a superintendent, and had no authority as a bishop in the Church of God, and this feeling and other considerations prompted him to write, nearly two months after the death of John Wesley, first to Bishop White and then, three weeks later—May 14, 1791—to Bishop Seabury, proposing measures for a reunion of the Methodists with the Episcopal Church."*

If this writer had a proper regard for the ninth commandment he would at least permit Dr. Coke to speak for himself. If the proposal to unite the Methodists and the Episcopalians proved that Dr. Coke felt that he had no "authority as a bishop in the Church of God," what does Dr. Madison's proposition to unite the Episcopalians with the Methodists prove? That Dr. Madison felt that *he* had "no authority as a bishop in the Church of God?" For more

* *Life of Seabury*, p. 311.

than seventy-five years Dr. Coke's explanation of his letter to Dr. White has been before the world. Why, in the name of every thing that is fair and honorable, do Episcopalian writers *force* a meaning upon this man's words against his protest? Dr. Coke has stated, in as strong terms as the language affords, that he did *not* doubt the validity of his ordination as a bishop in the Church of God. Shall Dr. Beardsley assume "infallibility" as well as "apostolicity," and speak as an apostolical discernor of spirits, professing to know that a certain thing was in the mind of a writer when that writer says most positively that it was not there? Upon what principle of justice is this conduct based? Admitting that Dr. Coke committed a great blunder—and it is doubtful if there exists a Methodist at this day who does not believe that the letter to Dr. White was a grievous blunder—why will sensible men continue to make more of this matter than is actually contained in it?

Beyond question the purpose is to make Dr. Coke say that he doubted the validity of his ordination by Mr. Wesley. In his letter to the author of this volume, Dr. Beardsley says it is a "fair inference" that he did doubt it. But Dr. Coke says he did nothing of the kind. Which is the best authority for Dr. Coke's opinions, Dr. Beardsley or Dr. Coke? Because Dr. White and Dr. Provoost and the Episcopalians generally *doubted*, and many of them *denied*, the validity of Dr. Seabury's episcopal orders, is it fair to *compel* Dr. Coke to doubt his own in the face of his positive statement to the contrary?

When the matter was first made public Dr. Coke was in Europe. In response to a letter requesting in-

formation, he addressed a letter to the Rev. Ezekiel Cooper, and this letter was presented to the General Conference of 1808, viz.:

NEAR LEEDS (Yorkshire), January 29, 1808.

To the General American Conference.

MY VERY DEAR BRETHREN: I wrote you a letter about two months ago, directed to the care of my dear brethren, the Messrs. Cooper and Wilson, in which I briefly opened my mind to you concerning my relations toward you, observing to this purport that if you judged that my being with you would help to preserve your union, and if I was allowed to give my opinion or judgment on every station of the preachers as far as I chose, and upon every thing else that could come under the inspection of the bishops, or superintendents, you might call me, and we would settle our affairs in Europe as soon as possible, and sail for America and be with you for life. Without your compliance in the latter point—viz., in respect to a full right of giving my judgment—I should be so far from being useful in preserving union that I should *merely* fill the place of a preacher.

But there is one point more which I must also notice. I find that a letter which I wrote to Bishop White in 1791 has been animadverted upon, though, if I mistake not, the letter itself has not been published.

There are very few of you who can possibly recollect any thing of what I am now about to add. Many of you were then little children. We had at that time no regular General Conferences. One only had been held in 1784. I had indeed, with great labor and fatigue, a few months before I wrote this letter to Bishop White, prevailed on James O'Kelly and the thirty-six traveling preachers who had withdrawn with him from all connection with Bishop Asbury to submit to the decision of a General Conference. This Conference was to be held in about a year and a half after my departure from the States. And at this Conference—held, I think, the latter end of 1792—I proposed and obtained that great blessing to the American Connection, a permanency for General Conferences, which were to be held at stated times. Previously to the holding of this Conference (except the general one held in 1784) there were only small district meetings, except the Council which was held at Cokesbury College in 1791 or 1792. Except the union which most

justly subsisted between Bishop Asbury on the one hand and the preachers and people on the other, the Society, as such, taken in the aggregate, was almost like a rope of sand. I longed to see matters on a footing likely to be permanent. Bishop Asbury did the same; and it was that view of things, I doubt not, that led Bishop Asbury, the year before, to call and to endeavor to establish a regular Council, who were to meet him annually at Cokesbury. In this point I differed in sentiment from my venerable brother. But I saw the danger of our situation, though I well knew that God was sufficient for all things. I did verily believe then that, under God, the Connection would be more likely to be saved from convulsions by a union with the old Episcopal Church than any other way—not by a dereliction of ordination, sacraments, and the Methodist Discipline, but by a junction on proper terms. Bishop White, in two interviews I had with him in Philadelphia, gave me reason to believe that this junction might be accomplished with ease. Dr. Magaw was perfectly sure of it. Indeed (if Mr. Ogden, of New Jersey, did not mistake in the information he gave me), a canon passed the House of Bishops of the old Episcopal Church in favor of it.* Bishop Madison, according to the same information, took the canon to the lower house. “But it was there thrown out,” said Mr. Ogden, to whom I explained the whole business, “because they did not understand the full meaning of it.” Mr. Ogden added that he spoke against it because he did not understand it, but that it would have met with his warm support had he understood the full intention of it.†

I had provided in the fullest manner in my indispensable, necessary conditions for the security and, I may say, for the independence of our discipline and places of worship. But I thought (perhaps erroneously, and I *believe so now*) that our field of action would have been exceedingly enlarged by that junction, and that myriads would have attended our ministry in consequence of it who were at that time much prejudiced against us. All things unitedly considered led me to write the letter and meet Bishop White and Dr. Magaw on the subject in Philadelphia.

*The House of Bishops then consisted of four persons—Bishops Seabury, White, Provoost, and Madison.--W. P. H.

†This evidently refers to the proposition of Bishop Madison, made at the convention of 1792. According to Dr. White, this proposition was entirely independent of Dr. Coke's letter, and it was withdrawn by consent, because it could not accomplish the end desired.--W. P. H.

But it may be asked why I did not consult Bishop Asbury before I took these steps. I answer, It was impossible. I was at and near Philadelphia, and he was somewhere in the South.* We had finished our district meetings, and he was to be in the State of Maryland about the time of my sailing for England. I wanted that every thing should be prepared against my return—God willing, in about a year and a half—for further consideration; that Bishop White, etc., should have time to consult their convention; and that I might also lay the matter before Bishop Asbury, and correspond with him upon the subject, and after that, if proper, bring the business before the General Conference, which was to be held in order to take into consideration James O'Kelly's division. Before I sailed for England I met Bishop Asbury at Newcastle, in the State of Delaware (from which place I went on board), and laid the matter before him, who, with that caution which peculiarly characterizes him, gave me no decisive opinion on the subject.

The next objection (and I think the only important one remaining) is the following: "If you did not think that the episcopal ordination of Mr. Asbury was valid, why did you ordain him? Was there not duplicity in this business?" I answer:

1. I never, since I could reason on those things, considered the doctrine of *the uninterrupted apostolic succession of bishops* as at all valid or true.

2. I am of our late venerable father Mr. Wesley's opinion—that the order of bishops and presbyters is one and the same.

3. I believe that the episcopal form of Church government is the best in the world when the episcopal power is under due regulation and responsibility.

4. I believe that it is well to follow the example of the primitive Church, as exemplified in the word of God, by setting apart persons for great ministerial purposes by the imposition of hands, but especially those who are appointed for offices of the first rank in the Church.

* Dr. Coke's memory, after the lapse of seventeen years, cannot be expected to recall every circumstance connected with this affair. Bishop Asbury was not in Dr. Coke's neighborhood in Philadelphia when he had the interviews with Dr. White, but when the letter was written Dr. Coke was in Richmond and Bishop Asbury was only a few miles distant. Coke's letter was still unpublished—at least, it had not reached his eyes in print—and the perturbation of his mind in 1791 must account for the seeming lapses into which he had fallen in 1808.
—W. P. H.

From all I have advanced you may easily perceive, my dear brethren, that I do not consider the imposition of hands, on the one hand, as essentially necessary for any office in the Church; nor do I, on the other hand, think that the repetition of the imposition of hands for the same office, when important circumstances require it, is at all improper.

If it be granted that my plan of union with the old Episcopal Church was desirable (*which now I think was not so, though I most sincerely believed it to be so at that time*), then, if the plan could not have been accomplished without a repetition of the imposition of hands for the same office, I did believe, and do now believe, and have no doubt that the repetition of the imposition of hands would have been perfectly justifiable for the enlargement of the field of action, etc., and would not, by any means, have invalidated the former consecration or imposition of hands. Therefore, I have no doubt but my consecration of Bishop Asbury was perfectly valid, and would have been so even if he had been reconsecrated. I never did apply to the general convention or any other convention for reconsecration.* I never intended that either Bishop Asbury or myself should give up our episcopal office if the junction were to take place; but I should have had no scruple then, nor should I now, *if the junction were desirable*, to have submitted to or to submit to a reimposition of hands in order to accomplish a great object; but I do say again, I do *not* now believe such a junction desirable.

I have thus simply and candidly, though in few words, told you my whole mind on this subject. I do not consider my solemn engagements to you invalidated by any thing I have done or you have done. But I charge you, by the glory of God, and by every tie of love, gratitude, and candor, that you take no step which may injure my character. And now I conclude with assuring you that I greatly love and esteem you; that it is a delight to me to pray for your prosperity; and that I am your very affectionate brother and faithful friend,

T. COKE.

In reply to this communication the General Conference of 1808 directed a letter to be sent to Dr.

*This, in all fairness, must be taken as an *absolute* disclaimer. He made no application to any person or convention for consecration at the hands of the bishops of the P. E. Church.—W. P. II.

Coke. In this letter the following paragraphs relate to the question under discussion:

“Your two letters were respectfully received, and had a salutary effect upon our minds. The reasons which you have assigned for some former transactions, and the ingenuous candor which you have manifested in frankly acknowledging and declaring the motives and inducements that led you to those measures, together with your affectionate acknowledgment that in certain cases you were mistaken as to your views of some of the points in question, as likewise your manifest friendship and good-will to this Connection and your American brethren, and your evident solicitude to retain a place and standing among us—taking these circumstances collectively, they had a great influence upon some of our minds in removing certain suspicious fears which had been imbibed rather unfavorable to your standing among us.

“You may be assured that we feel an affectionate regard for you; that we gratefully remember your repeated labors of love toward us; and that we sensibly feel our obligations for the services you have rendered us. We hope that no circumstance will ever alienate our Christian affection from you, or yours from us. We wish to maintain and to cultivate a good understanding and brotherly unity with you and with all our European brethren. In full Conference, of near one hundred and thirty members, we entered into a very long conversation, and very serious and solemn debate upon sundry resolutions which were laid before us relative to your case. Probably on no former occasion, in any Conference in America, was so much said in defense of your character and to your honor

as a ministerial servant of God and his Church. Your worth, your labors, your disinterested services, fatigues, dangers, and difficulties to serve your American brethren were set forth pathetically, and urged with the force of reason and truth in an argumentative manner; and our candid and impartial judgments were constrained to yield to the conclusion that we were bound by the ties of moral and religious obligations to treat you most respectfully, and to retain a grateful remembrance of all your labors of love toward us."

This letter of the General Conference, while dealing tenderly with Dr. Coke, does not fail to emphasize the error which he had committed in attempting a negotiation which, under any conceivable circumstances, could result in no benefit to American Methodism. That his error was solely one of judgment is admitted; but the misrepresentations to which it gave origin and currency brought no little embarrassment to the Methodists of that day. Dr. Coke's past services could not be forgotten; but the time had come in which the American Church was fully capable of supplying within its own borders the necessary wisdom and experience to superintend the affairs of the Connection. As the British Conference had requested it, therefore Dr. Coke was permitted to reside permanently in Europe, only to visit America on the call of the General Conference.

There is one issue which Dr. Beardsley has chosen to make in his "Life of Seabury," and it is accepted as readily as it is tendered. "A movement of great importance," says Dr. Beardsley, "which was kept secret for the time, was made in 1791. It was nothing

less than a proposition to reunite the Methodists in America with the Protestant Episcopal Church; and it took the form of an application from the Rev. Dr. Thomas Coke, an Oxford graduate and a presbyter of the Church of England, who for fourteen years had been following John Wesley, and, like him, not intending to promote a separation, which had now been actually accomplished. Discovering his error, he publicly recanted, and repeated his recantation in the largest chapels in London and other parts of Great Britain."*

Let the reader observe that Dr. Beardsley says "the separation had been actually accomplished." What separation? Of the American Methodists from the Episcopalians. There is no other meaning that these words can bear. "Discovering his error" in promoting this separation in America, Dr. Coke "publicly recanted, and repeated his recantation in the largest chapels in London and other parts of Great Britain." Upon being challenged for his authority for making the statement that Dr. Coke not only recanted the error of organizing the Methodist Episcopal Church in America, but "repeated his recantation in the largest chapels in London and Great Britain," Dr. Beardsley refers to Coke's letter to Seabury for his authority.

Now, let us see what Dr. Coke says in that letter upon this subject:

"Therefore, when I was fully convinced of my error in the steps I took to bring about *a separation from the Church of England in Europe*, I delivered, before a congregation of about three thousand people, in our

* Life of Seabury, p. 310.

largest chapel in Dublin, on a Sunday evening after preaching, an exhortation, which in fact amounted to a recantation of my error. Some time afterward, I repeated the same in our largest chapels in London and in several other parts of England and Ireland, *and I have reason to believe that my proceedings in this respect have given a death-blow to all the hopes of a separation which may exist in the minds of any in those kingdoms.*"

The "separation," whatever and wherever it was, Dr. Coke says has received a *death-blow*. Dr. Beardsley says it *has been accomplished*. Dr. Coke says the separation he is writing about was in *Europe*; it suits Dr. Beardsley's purpose to say it is in America. Is it possible that Dr. Beardsley, withholding the letter from his readers, intends to create an impression that Dr. Coke recanted publicly his action in America, when he knew that the recantation referred to related to Coke's efforts to separate the Wesleyans from the Church in England? That such *is* the construction placed upon his statement by the writer in the *Church Review* is apparent from these words: "Dr. Beardsley tells us that after Wesley's death, in 1791, Coke, who was a graduate of Oxford, applied to Bishops Seabury and White to impart the apostolical succession to himself and Aston; and, not obtaining this request, returned to England and publicly recanted his schism."

The errors in this short extract exceed the number of lines employed in printing it: 1. When Dr. Coke wrote his letter to Dr. White he did not know that Wesley was dead. 2. He did not apply to either White or Seabury for the "apostolical succession." 3. Dr. White would not have united with Dr. Seabury in imparting the "succession" if it had been applied

for. 4. Drs. White and Seabury did not *refuse* to impart the succession. 5. There was no such person as "Aston." 6. Dr. Coke had made no schism. 7. Consequently he could not recant it. The whole statement is an error from the first phrase to the concluding word. As a specimen of misrepresentation reduced to its last analysis, the sentence stands unrivaled in the annals of literature.

The explanation of Dr. Coke's meaning concerning the "error" and its recantation is by no means difficult. But in order to understand it we must let Mr. Wesley explain the meaning of "separation from the Church" once more. "The question properly refers," says Mr. Wesley under date of September 20, 1788, "to a total and immediate separation. Such was that of Mr. Ingham's people first, and afterward that of Lady Huntingdon's, who all agreed to form themselves into a separate body without delay, to go to church no more, and to have no more connection with the Church of England than with the Church of Rome. Such a separation I have always declared against, and certainly it will not take place (if ever it does) while I live. But a kind of separation has already taken place, and will inevitably spread, though by slow degrees. Those ministers, so called, who neither live nor preach the gospel, I dare not say are sent of God. Where one of these is settled many of the Methodists dare not attend his ministry; so, if there be no other church in that neighborhood, they go to church no more. This is the case in a few places already, and it will be the case in more; and no one can justly blame me for this; neither is it contrary to any of my professions." *

* Works, vol. xiii., p. 263.

Such are the disabilities of a "National Church," an institution foreign to the scriptural account of the kingdom of God. Nobody can enter it except by birth and baptism; nobody is expelled from it except by expatriation or death. Of discipline it knows nothing; and hence it is a mere hazard whether the man who is called "minister" knows any thing of the gospel he is required to preach. If he does not, there is no remedy. There is no hope for the people thus burdened with a blind guide. There were many of these, and not a few of the bishops were persecutors in a proper sense. To one of these bishops Mr. Wesley wrote in 1790, and plainly charged him with driving the Methodists from the Church. "And is it a Christian—yea, a Protestant—bishop that so persecutes his own flock?" asks the venerable man. "I say persecutes," he adds, "for it is persecution to all intents and purposes."

The restive spirit of Dr. Coke, coming from free America, with its young and vigorous Church, believed that it would be best to cut loose from the Establishment, and preach the gospel to all that would hear, and at any hour of the day. Consequently, he set the example, preaching in Dublin and other places during "church hours," and administering the communion. Mr. Charles Wesley had been doing this very thing for many years in London, but John Wesley disapproved of Dr. Coke's movement. In order to test the matter he made a proposition to the Methodists of Dublin. If they would attend the parish church once in the month, he would give them a noon service three Sabbaths in the month. This arrangement worked well. It doubled the attendance at the

parish church, and it quieted the feeling for a complete separation. It was this plan of compromise that won the impulsive Doctor; and as a man of peace he did not hesitate to indorse it, and thus recanted the error of promoting a separation in Europe. But what had that to do with the Methodist Episcopal Church in America? Less, if possible, than Dr. Beardsley's representation has to do with the sober truth of history.

But Dr. Coke admitted that Mr. Wesley did not have the authority to confer episcopal powers, for he says in his letter to Dr. White: "He did indeed invest me, *as far as he had a right to do so*, with episcopal authority." This argument is offered by Episcopalians as a proof that Dr. Coke knew that Mr. Wesley had no *right* to make him a bishop. The statement is one of those vicious half-truths that are so injurious to every good cause. Mr. Wesley had as much right to make Dr. Coke a bishop as the Archbishop of Canterbury had to make Dr. White a bishop. Suppose that the Episcopal ministers and laymen in Pennsylvania had refused to receive Dr. White, what would have been the nature of his episcopal authority? All the bishops in England could no more *make* a bishop of the diocese of Pennsylvania than they could make a President of the United States. Authority in the Church comes from *the Church*, not from the ordaining minister, whether bishop or presbyter. Ordination *confers* no authority; it only recognizes it as already conferred by the Church to which the minister belongs. This authority in the Church is under limitations. It must be a scriptural character, for a scriptural purpose; and if these conditions be complied with the *form* in which the ordination is expressed

amounts to nothing. There is nothing *essential* in the form.

Therefore, if Dr. Coke had been rejected by the American Methodists he would not have been a bishop. The superstitious idea of a depositum of episcopal power transmitted by the hands of the ordainer deserves less consideration than the Romanist theory of succession. Mr. Wesley's views were eminently scriptural, notwithstanding the shackles of a State hierarchy that impeded his plans and often thwarted them. "Last autumn Dr. Coke sailed from England," he writes February 25, 1785, "and is now visiting the flock in the midland provinces of America, and settling them on the New Testament plan, to which they all willingly and joyfully conform, being all united, as by one Spirit, so in one body. I trust they will no more want such pastors as are after God's own heart."* As far as he could give any man authority over the flock he gave it to Dr. Coke; but Francis Asbury, weaned by many years of labor and study from the traditions of an unscriptural hierarchy, could not fail to realize the necessity for the *origin* of Church authority in the Church itself. He would take no episcopal authority from Mr. Wesley until the Church had elected him to the office. This is the true position. It is the rock foundation on which all Church authority must be built. "As far as he had a right to do so," then, simply recognizes the right of the Church to accept or reject an appointment from him whom they recognized as, under God, "the father of the family."

But it is said further that Dr. Coke confessed the nul-

* Works, vol. xiii., p. 137.

lity of his own ordination by his willingness to submit to the "laying on of hands" the second time. This argument is valid against those only who regard the imposition of hands as an *essential* part of ordination. The Wesleyan Methodists, although they had ordained ministers before the death of Mr. Wesley, and continuously afterward, never practiced the imposition of hands until the year 1835. To those who are accustomed to the "laying on of hands" in ordination, the omission of the ceremony seems to be fatal to the rite itself. But this is simply because the force of habit has taken the place of reason. There is nothing in the New Testament that inseparably connects the imposition of hands with the fact of ordination. Indeed, it is only because the act is a symbol of imploring the divine blessing and guidance to the person ordained that it deserves to be employed at all. In most Churches the symbol of authority given to the candidate is the placing of the Bible in his hands. It is the book of God that is given as a treasure-house, a guide, a rule of life. It is given in the name of the Church because it is to be used to edify the Church. It is that without which and beyond which neither Church nor minister has any right, any authority, whatever.

When we say, then, that Dr. Coke was willing to submit to the reïmpositon of hands, and that he could do this without in any degree repudiating his ordination by Mr. Wesley, the matter is so plain that no amount of argument or illustration can simplify it. Ordination is not a sacrament, as the Romanists pretend. There is no formula laid down in the Scriptures, and there is no proof that any one specific form

was practiced in the early Church. The formal delivery of the Bible to the recipient, in accordance with our present practice, is sufficient for all purposes.

But there is a grave reflection that follows as a consequence that even the enemies of Dr. Coke should hesitate to avow. If, as Dr. Beardsley asserts, Dr. Coke did not believe that he had any authority as a bishop in the Church of God, upon what principle, as an honest man, did he continue, for more than twenty years afterward, to *ordain* young men to the ministry of the word? Within five months of the time that this "doubt" of the validity of his ordination is expressed, according to Dr. Beardsley, Dr. Coke is found in the Channel Islands ordaining a French minister to be a deacon and a presbyter in the Church. How can this conduct be reconciled to truth and honesty? Shall we take the example of a quondam "successor of the apostles," a bishop of Dr. Beardsley's Church, who, doubting his title-deeds, examines, questions, debates, and argues with himself for years, while ever and anon ordaining candidates for the ministry? But did Bishop Ives lay his hands upon the head of a candidate after he made overtures to the Roman Catholic Church? If so, what censure is too heavy for him?

But the author of the "Life of Seabury" draws a character of Dr. Coke that every honest man must pronounce to be beneath contempt. Knowing the invalidity of his ordination, Coke recants publicly, but pursues his way nevertheless. Convinced that he is not a bishop, he performs for twenty years and more the duties of a bishop, assumes the responsibilities of a bishop, and dares the vengeance of Heaven and the

judgment of men. Not only so, but such is the stupidity of the civilized world that, although this man has published his shame as far back as the year 1789, before the death of Wesley, no Wesleyan in England ever found it out, and no Methodist in America ever heard a word about it until the Rev. E. Edwards Beardsley published it in the year 1884! Does any sane man believe that the enemies of Methodism could be ignorant of such an event as the repudiation of his episcopal character by the first Methodist bishop? Dr. Beardsley has drawn too heavily upon the bank of public credulity, and the ignoble charge will be repelled with the indignation that it deserves.

"Dr. Coke evidently felt that he was merely a superintendent, and had no authority as a bishop," says Dr. Beardsley. Pray, what is a New Testament "superintendent" but a bishop? Do not the lexicons define the Greek verb *ἐπισκοπέω*, *episkopeo*, to superintend? and is not *ἐπισκοπος*, *episkopos*, a superintendent? It would seem to be needless to prove a proposition that every school-boy knows if he has read a chapter in the New Testament. But in this, as in many other things, there are wise men who do not scruple to take every advantage that presents itself. The English reader not versed in etymology must be told that the verb which means to *oversee*, to *superintend* in Greek is the word employed to express the exercise of the office of a bishop. His superintendency, or charge, is his *ἐπισκοπή*, or bishopric.

But what is a *bishop*? Every one who is acquainted with the forms of government prevailing in the various Churches of Christendom knows that the word "bishop" is employed to designate a variety of offi-

ers, differing not only among the different Churches, but in the same Church in many respects in different countries. The office of a bishop in the time of Thomas à Becket was not the same thing that exists in the Church of England in our day. There were duties and functions that were performed by the bishop of a diocese in the fifteenth century that have long since ceased to exist. But it must be remembered that the theory of episcopacy, as held by the Church of Rome, is in irreconcilable conflict with the High-church doctrine. At the same time the "apostolical successionist" must derive his line of succession from the Church of Rome.

According to the Romanist, clerical orders form one of the seven sacraments in the Church. There are also seven grades or orders of ministers instead of three. It is a remarkable fact that "bishop" is not one of the seven orders of the Roman Catholic ministry. There are *four* minor and three *holy* orders. Porter, reader, exorcist, acolyte, are the minor orders; sub-deacon, deacon, and priest, are the holy orders. The seventh and highest order in the Roman Catholic ministry—that of priest—has four grades: priest, bishop, archbishop, and patriarch. Over these, supreme, and therefore having no "order," is the Pontiff, or Pope.* Thus it appears that the Church of Rome recognizes seven orders of the clergy, and excludes episcopacy from the dignity of a sacrament. Not only is this the case, but the famous Council of Trent, after days, months, and years spent in conference and debate, *refused to declare that the episcopal office was established by divine right.* The utmost exertions of

* Catechism of the Council of Trent, pp. 216-222.

the bishops failed to accomplish this purpose. They had a political as well as an ecclesiastical motive in striving to make the Council declare that episcopacy exists by divine right. "The episcopate," says Bungeer, "is not reputed as an order, but as an office in the order. The bishop is no more a priest than is a mere parish priest; he is a priest charged with superior functions."* Nevertheless, a priest cannot confirm, he cannot ordain, a layman to any one of the seven orders. But the peculiar functions of a bishop are not derived by succession from the order of bishops, but imparted as a gift from the sovereign lord of the Church, the Pope of Rome. All the bishops in the Roman Church cannot make a bishop without the authority of the Pope; and by his mere mandate any priest in Christendom becomes a bishop whether episcopal hands are laid upon his head or not.

It is important to observe this distinction. It suits the convenience of the popes to comply with the custom of episcopal ordination in the bestowal of bishoprics, but the compliance is of grace, and not of law or doctrine. In Protestant countries a rigid adherence to system and order has a tendency to soften the monarchical features of the papacy; but policy, not principle, is the motive for this compliance. We see in this fact the denial of the divine right of episcopacy, the ground upon which the Romanists repudiate the ministerial orders of the Church of England. If the bishop is an officer by *divine right*, his powers, once possessed, are inalienable. The English prelates who were ordained under the sanction of the Pope, and afterward renounced allegiance to Rome,

* History of the Council of Trent, p. 367.

upon the "divine right" theory were still valid bishops. Therefore, their consecration of Archbishop Parker made him a true bishop of the Church. From him, for the most part, episcopal orders have descended in the Church of England—not in "unbroken succession," according to the High-church view, by any means, but after the fashion of other ministerial successions. But, upon the Roman theory, the moment the reformed bishops abjured the Pope, they ceased, *ipso facto*, to be bishops at all, and could ordain nobody, for communion with the "See" of Rome is essential to membership in the Christian Church. This is the ground upon which Dr. Milner, in his "End of Controversy," hands over the Church of England to the same "uncovenanted mercies" to which American High-churchmen consign the greater part of the Christian world. Dr. Milner charges the Church of England with "having renounced Christ's commission given to the apostles," and "hence it clearly appears that there is and can be no apostolical succession of ministry in the Established Church more than in any other congregations or societies of Protestants."*

These blasts and counter-blasts of the trumpets of excommunication are altogether harmless, and sometimes they are amusing. One of the books that Bishop Wilberforce delights to quote in his "History of the Protestant Episcopal Church in America" is "Reed and Mattheson's Narrative." These two ministers were sent by the Congregationalists of Great Britain to inspect and report upon the state of religion in America. The two volumes published by them are made up of facts and fancies, as such books are apt to be.

* Smyth: Apostolical Succession, p. 418.

Whenever the Bishop of Oxford wished to give a thrust at the "revivals" in American Methodist circles, he furnished a warmly indorsed quotation from his brother Britons. But none of his "History" of Episcopalianism in America is taken from that source. The following extract will give the reason:

"Placed in temporal and civil advantages on a level with every other body," says Dr. Reed, the Protestant Episcopal Church "stands on the ground of the divine right of episcopal ordination and apostolic succession. Now, it is certainly somewhat bold in the parent Church to denounce some eight thousand ministers at least equal to her own in pastoral ability and success, as in 'pretended holy orders'—that is, in a surreptitious use of the ministry; yet there is something of pomp and privilege and numbers to uphold these pretensions. But really, for such lofty pretensions to be insisted on by a Church so situated as is that in America, and at this time of day, is painfully ridiculous."*

* Reed and Mattheson: *Visit to the American Churches*, vol. ii., p. 75. These wholesome words were written in the year 1834, at which time the Methodists of America exceeded six hundred and forty thousand, being one communicant for twenty-two persons of all ages in the population. At that time these gentlemen—Reed and Mattheson—tell us that there were only three hundred and fifty thousand communicants in the Established Church of England; and this is "the real test of strength and influence," they tell us. If so, American Methodism has outgrown the increase of the population; for in 1884, fifty years after Dr. Reed's calculation was made, there were in the United States over four millions of Methodist communicants, or one in thirteen of the population. As the Episcopalians had no reliable statistics fifty years ago, we cannot tell what their relative growth has been, but in 1884 they had only one communicant for one hundred and fifty-eight inhabitants in the United States.

Chapter XIX.

The Name Bishop Disliked by the European Reformers—Calvin—His Ambition—Presidents of Churches—Superintendents and Bishops the Same—Scotland and John Knox—Scotch Superintendents, Bishops—Hungarian Superintendents—Moravians and Bohemians—Waldenses—United Brethren in Christ—Denmark—Testimony of William Fulke—John and Charles Wesley.

THE same state of affairs that made the *name* “bishop” an offense and a grievance to Mr. Wesley produced the form of government adopted by the Protestant Churches of France and Geneva. Enthroned with the King, Romanism exercised her power in France through her bishops, and when the reformed State of Geneva became an ecclesiastical power, independent and influential, the revolt against episcopacy was decided and permanent. “It is no wonder that the people rejected episcopacy,” says the biographer of Calvin, “as they shook off the fetters of popery in opposition to their bishops.”* “The flight of her bishop,” says the Rev. Edward Smedley, “prevented the continuance of episcopacy in the Church of Geneva, although it by no means appears that Calvin himself was an enemy to that institution, and it would be difficult to establish a necessary connection between his polity, from which it was excluded by compulsion, and later voluntary Presbyterianism.”† It is known that John Calvin had received no ministerial orders of

* Memoirs of Calvin, by John Mackenzie, p. 47. † History of the Reformed Religion in France, vol. i., p. 47.

any kind by the laying on of hands, and, in default of a bishop turning Protestant, there was no possibility of obtaining "the succession" after the style of modern High-churchmen. According to their theory, therefore, there was neither Church nor ministry in Geneva nor in France among the Huguenots.

"That Calvin was influenced in part by ambition it would be idle to deny," says Mr. Smedley, "for what man ever produced great effects upon his species if wholly devoid of that passion? — a passion, when purified and defecated, amongst the noblest ingrafted on our nature. And Calvin's ambition was thus sublimed. The work which he took in hand was not his own work, but that of his Master. In order to perform it to the utmost an extraordinary measure of power was necessary, and he therefore omitted no effort to obtain, no vigilance to preserve, his supremacy. That he did not mistrust his own use of that power can never be a matter of surprise. That he saw its danger if transmitted to others, is evident from his not having recommended a successor, and from Beza's immediate advice after his friend's death that the office of president should be allowed to expire with him. The infallibility, in all but name, which he maintained while alive, was too precious and too perilous a legacy to be bequeathed to a successor."*

Now what was this office of "president" that died with John Calvin? Wherein did it differ from the extraordinary relation sustained by Mr. Wesley to the Methodist Societies of Great Britain for more than half a century? It happened that John Wesley had received in the regular way whatever of min-

* History of the Reformed Religion in France, vol. i., p. 46.

isterial authority the laying on of hands could give. In this respect he was in a better condition to observe and to preserve Church order and regularity. But neither of these great men received his appointment or consecration for the great work of his life-time from man or by man. "No man taketh this honor unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron." And who is he that will dispute the divine calling of these men? Calvin's authority was supreme. So was Mr. Wesley's; but their methods and aims were not precisely similar. Calvin labored to bring back the age from the corruptions of Romanism to the simplicity and purity of Scripture doctrines and morality. Wesley labored to bring men to Christ that he might cast out the evil spirits of human pride and transgression, and regenerate society by the breath of the Spirit of God.

Before the death of Calvin the Protestants of Scotland, under the leadership of John Knox, had formed a plan of Church government, in which the episcopal duties mentioned in the New Testament were committed to officers styled superintendents. "In the original sketch of the Scottish Church Discipline," says Sir Walter Scott, "provision was made for certain persons named superintendents, who were intrusted, *as their name implies*, with the spiritual power of *bishops*."* The number and duties of these superintendents we learn from one of the biographers of John Knox: "Instead of fixing all the ministers in particular charges, it was judged proper, after supplying the principal towns, to assign to the rest the superintendence of a large district, over which they

* History of Scotland, vol. ii., p. 70.

were appointed regularly to itinerate, for the purpose of preaching, planting churches, and inspecting the conduct of ministers, exhorters, and readers. These were called superintendents. The number originally proposed was ten, but owing to the scarcity of proper persons, or rather the want of necessary funds, there were never more than six appointed. The superintendent met with the ministers and delegated elders of his district twice a year, in the provincial synod, which took cognizance of ecclesiastical affairs within its bounds.”*

The Methodist reader will be impressed with the analogy existing between this office of superintendent in the Scotch Church three centuries ago and the office of a bishop in the Methodist Episcopal Church at the present day. The likeness is stronger and more evident than that between the bishops of the Church of England and of the Protestant Episcopal Church. But we are informed, moreover, concerning the election and ordination of these superintendents. One of the oldest historians of Scotland, Raphael Holinshead, tells us that on the 9th of March, 1561, an election of *superintendent* was held at Edinburgh, at which John Knox presided. After a sermon defining the duties of the office, Knox announced that Mr. John Spotswood had been nominated. “After this was called the said Mr. John Spotswood,” says Holinshead, “who, answering to his name, the minister demanded if any man knew any crimes or offenses of the said Spotswood that might disable him to be called to

* McCrie's *Life of John Knox*, p. 160; Scott of Cupar: *State of the Kirk of Scotland*, pp. 32, 34; Neal's *History of the Puritans*, vol. i., p. 40.

that office, which thing thrice demanded there was after question moved to the whole multitude, if there were any other whom they would put in election with the said Mr. Spotswood. Then the people were asked whether (if they admitted the said Spotswood for their superintendent) they would honor and obey him as Christ's minister in every thing pertaining to his charge.

“Whereunto the people answered that they would, which thus granted there were further questions and matters touching the articles of the Apostles' Creed, and concerning the state of religion, propounded to the superintendent intended to be created. Whereunto, when he had answered affirmatively, the people were again demanded for his allowance, which they easily granted with the consent of the nobility. These things thus performed, and a certain prayer, to obtain the Spirit of God to be poured into this new elect vessel, finished, the rest of the ministers, if there be any, and elders of the Church present, in sign of their full consent, shall take the elected by the hand. And so the chief minister, giving an especial benediction, the form whereof is there set down, with the exhortation which they must also use to the elected, this election is wholly finished (without any imposition of hands on his head), and he sufficiently created superintendent minister.”*

The style of this writer is a little obscure in the closing paragraph, owing to the fact that he is combining a particular event with the form provided for the use of those elected to the office. The account is

*Holinshead's *Scottish Chronicles*, vol. ii., p. 311; Hetherington: *History of the Church of Scotland*, p. 11.

interesting, however, as it gives us a clear view of Knox's understanding of the word *ordain* in the New Testament. An election by the people, with or without the imposition of hands, is a valid *ordination* in the judgment of the Scotch reformers, and in this they are sustained by the voice of Christian antiquity in the centuries nearest to the time of the apostles.

Nennius, a writer of the eighth century, concludes his "History of the Britons" with the record of the year 642. Archbishop Usher, in his "Discourse of the Religion of the Irish and British," quotes this author, and credits many of his statements concerning the life of St. Patrick in Ireland. The miracles excepted, the details given by Nennius throw some light upon the question of the Irish episcopacy in the fifth century. "St. Patrick taught the gospel in foreign nations for the space of forty years," says Nennius. "He taught the servants of God, and he wrote three hundred and sixty-five canonical and other books relating to the Catholic faith. He founded as many churches, and consecrated the same number of bishops, strengthening them with the Holy Ghost. He ordained three thousand presbyters, and converted and baptized twelve thousand persons in the province of Connaught."*

According to this writer there were as many bishops as there were churches in Ireland, a statement that overthrows the theory of diocesan episcopacy "What kind of *bishops* these were," says Mr. Hetherington, "is sufficiently apparent from the fact that there was one for each church, and also from the number of elders—about eight to each bishop. It was, in

* Nennius: History of the Britons, § 54.

short, manifestly the same institution which ultimately became the Presbyterian Church of Scotland—a parish minister, with his session of elders, in each church and parish that had received the gospel.”*

A few years earlier than the constitution of the Scotch Church, we find the Hungarians organizing themselves into a religious body, which was the legitimate successor of the Protestant Church to which John Huss belonged. These were connected with the famous Waldenses or Vaudois, who sprung from the Patareni or Cathari, of Italy, an evangelical sect whose origin is lost in the early history of the Christian Church. In the year 1550, “an ecclesiastical conference was held in the village of Forna,” says the historian of the Hungarian Church, “limiting and defining the duties of the *bishop* or *superintendent* at ecclesiastical visitations.”† In the constitution of this Church the same reason prevailed against calling episcopal officers by the name of *bishops* that existed in England in the time of Mr. Wesley, and exists there at this day. The title was *preempted*, so to speak, belonging to officers of the State, and however great the difference between a scriptural bishop and the dignitary bearing that name in the Roman Catholic or the English Church, it was manifestly improper to apply it to the officers of a dissenting Society; therefore, the scriptural bishop was called a *superintendent*, as Mr. Wesley and John Knox preferred to call him. At a later period in Hungary we find the Protestant territory divided into three dioceses, and a superintendent elected for each. In case of the death of a superintendent the vacancy

* Hetherington: History of the Church of Scotland, p. 11. † History of the Protestant Church in Hungary, p. 82.

was filled by election.* It is to be noted that all of the spiritual duties consistent with the Protestant faith, and usually assigned to the episcopal office, were performed by the Hungarian superintendents. They were the judges of the ecclesiastical law, and formed the court of final resort. They had oversight of pastors and people, ordained the ministers, and superintended the temporal affairs of the Church. Near the commencement of the last century they began to be styled "Excellentissimus," a title which provoked the jealousy of the Romanists, and it was made the excuse of a furious persecution, which ultimately threatened the extinction of the Protestants. At one time it is estimated that there were three millions of Protestants in Hungary, Lutherans and Reformed, each sect having bishops under the title of superintendents.

Connected with these Protestants of Hungary were the Moravians and Bohemians, from whom sprung the celebrated community at Herrnhut. Count Zinzendorf was elected general overseer, and David Nitschmann was ordained a bishop by Jablonski, the venerable superintendent of the Bohemian Church. By the order of Frederick William, King of Prussia, Count Zinzendorf was ordained a bishop in 1737 by Jablonski. "The service was performed privately in Jablonski's house by that prelate and Bishop Nitschmann, with the written concurrence of Bishop Sitkovius, of Poland."† Zinzendorf visited America, and the Moravians established many missionary stations here, some of which are still in existence. But the episcopal orders of the Churches of Hungary, Bohemia, Mo-

* History of the Protestant Church in Hungary, p. 147. † Bibliotheca Sacra, vol. iii., p. 572.

ravia, and Poland are all derived from the Waldenses. These Protestants of the valleys are now, and have ever been, under a Presbyterian form of government. "There is nothing in the organization or action of these Churches that in the slightest degree savors of prelacy."* Mr. Faber, a minister of the Church of England, in his "Inquiry into the History and Theology of the Ancient Vallenses and Albigenses," says: "I readily confess that I am not able to *demonstrate* the circumstance of their possessing an apostolical succession, either as regularly transmitted by the episcopal ordination, or as less regularly handed down by the *simple* imposition of the hands by the presbytery." "It may, perhaps, endanger the whole system of apostolical succession," says Mr. Faber, "if we too rigidly insist upon the absolute necessity of a transmission through the medium of bishops only."†

There is scarcely any fact in mediæval Church history that is more certainly proved than the fact that the Waldenses or Albigenses did not preserve the "episcopal succession." In the annals of Roger de Hoveden we have no less than thirty-five pages devoted to the "heresy" of these Albigenses. Cardinal Peter visited them in the valley of Toulouse in the year 1176, and, after hearing them in the statement of their faith and practice, condemned them as heretics doomed to destruction. In the explication of their faith they declared that they acknowledged only such bishops and pastors as the New Testament authorized. But no such officer as "bishop" was named among them.‡ From one of these Waldensian superintendents in a

* Baird's Protestantism in Italy, p. 389. † Ibid., p. 390, *note*.
‡ Roger de Hoveden: Annals, vol. i., pp. 423-437; 471-491.

subsequent age the Moravian Bishop Comenius received ordination, after the dispersion of the Protestants in Bohemia; so that, as the Bohemian "line" was replaced by the Waldenses, and these had presbyterial ordination only, the orders of Bishop Jablonski were presbyterial in their character.

The question of Jablonski's episcopal orders was examined by the Archbishop of Canterbury in 1729, and he "expressed himself fully satisfied."* This may have been the case without any committal upon the part of the Archbishop. It is beyond doubt that the Moravians themselves have placed no confidence in the claim to prelatical succession, and the venerable Otterbein, who assisted at the ordination of Bishop Asbury, became the founder of a Church in which there are "superintendents" or bishops after the New Testament pattern.

"The Church of the United Brethren in Christ" in this country was regularly organized in the year 1800, although there were many German pastors and teachers in communion with the Lutheran Church, and some independent of it for many years before. The evangelical portion of the preachers and members of these German Churches united in one body, and elected Philip William Otterbein and Martin Boehm superintendents or bishops in 1800, and the denomination has maintained a career of great usefulness and prosperity.† Their bishops are elected once in four years, and, if not reelected, retire from office. They do not retain the ceremony of "laying on of hands" in the case of a superintendent or bishop; or, to use their form of expression, "in case one elder is elected a su-

* *Memoirs of James Hutton*, p. 16. † *Life of Otterbein*, p. 278.

perintendent, he need not be reördained, a second ordination being without scriptural warrant.”*

“It has of late years been ascertained,” says Dean Hook, “that, while episcopal succession has certainly been preserved in Sweden, it has been lost in the Church of Denmark, where the episcopacy is only nominal.”† Thus the confession is made that the prelatists of the United States made a narrow escape in not accepting the offer of the Danes to ordain ministers for America. Now it is certain that bishops are styled superintendents in Sweden, as well as in Denmark. Speaking of the religion of Sweden, the English ambassador resident there in 1688 says: “Under them (two archbishops) are seven or eight *superintendents*, who have all the power of bishops, and only want the name.”‡ Whatever may be the state of affairs in Sweden at this time, two hundred years ago the bishops were called superintendents; and this was done in a State Church that had no reason whatever to avoid the use of the term “bishop.” There can be but one reason for this usage, and that is *the words were equivalent*.

Among the many learned and eloquent works called forth in defense of the Reformation in England in the sixteenth century, none excels the treatise of William Fulke, “A defense of the sincere and true translations of the Holy Scriptures into the English tongue against the manifold cavils, frivolous quarrels, and impudent slanders of Gregory Martin, one of the readers of popish divinity in the traitorous seminary of

*History of the United Brethren in Christ, vol. ii., p. 158.

†Preface to Early Years of Bishop Hobart, p. 12. ‡Sweden in 1688, p. 227.

Rheims." This book was printed in 1583, and the author labored under the difficulty of defending translations that were far inferior to that of 1611. He had, moreover to argue with a man who was thoroughly furnished with all the resources of the Roman Catholic Church. The book is a treasury of wit and learning, the Romanist paragraph being printed verbatim, with all references, and the Protestant reply follows on the same page. Gregory Martin spares no pains, and refuses no implement of warfare, good, bad, or indifferent, if it does but serve his purpose. In one of these assaults upon his adversary he says: "Will you always follow fancy and not reason, do what you list, translate as you list, and not as the truth is, and that in the Holy Scriptures, which you boast and vaunt so much of? Because yourselves have them you call *bishops*, the name 'bishops' is in your English Bibles, which otherwise, by your own rule of translation, should be called an 'overseer' or 'superintendent.'"* In reply to one of these arguments of the Romanist, Fulke says: "Of all other importune and unreasonable judges you are one of the worst, that would enforce us to translate the Scriptures, which you confess observeth not the distinction of bishops and priests (*presbyters*), according to the fathers, which do almost always observe it. If we should translate those sentences of St. Augustine, we might use the word 'priest' for *presbyter*, and 'priesthood' for *presbyterium*; and if we use the words 'elder' and 'eldership,' what offense, I pray you, were it, when by these names we understand nothing but the same function and minister which Augustine doth? That *episcopus*, a 'bishop,'

* Fulke's Defense, p. 254.

was of very old time used to signify a degree ecclesiastical higher than presbyter, an 'elder' or 'priest,' we did never deny; we know it right well. We know what St. Jerome writeth upon the Epistle to Titus, chapter one: *Idem est ergo presbyter, qui episcopus*. 'The same man is *presbyter*, or an "elder" or "priest," which is *episcopus*, a bishop. And before that, by the instinct of the devil, factions were made in religion, and it was said among the people, "I am of Paul, I of Apollos, and I of Cephas," the churches were governed by common counsel *presbyterorum* "of the elders." But afterward, when every one thought those whom he had baptized to be his own, and not Christ's, it was decreed in the whole world that one *de presbyteris*, "of the elders," being elected, should be set over the rest, to whom all the care of the Church should pertain, and the seeds of schisms should be taken away.'"*

Let the reader examine these words closely, and he will see the origin of Methodist episcopacy. Dr. Coke was an elder. Mr. Wesley was an elder. In their order, or ministerial character, they were equal. Mr. Wesley selected Dr. Coke, and, as far as he had a right to ordain an officer for any Church, he *ordained* him superintendent or bishop of the Methodist Episcopal Church. The purpose was to organize a religious people into one body and under one form of government. Dr. White, of Pennsylvania, had no jurisdiction over them and no connection with them. Neither had Dr. Seabury. Mr. Wesley was their spiritual father. To him, as far as they could owe their religious experience to any human being, they owed their religious privileges and estates. As Mr. Wesley

* Fulke's Defense, p. 265.

was the 'overseer,' the superintendent of all the Arminian Methodists in Europe and America, he had the right to recognize a superintendent chosen by the American Methodists for the episcopal office. Which of the two, the spiritual "father" or the sons in the gospel, should make the choice in the first instance was immaterial. For the purposes of organization it was, perhaps, inevitable that Mr. Wesley should choose the agent and that the body organizing should approve of the choice.

To his brother Charles, in 1780, Mr. Wesley wrote: "Read Bishop Stillingfleet's *Irenicon*, or any impartial history of the ancient Church, and I believe you will think as I do. *I verily believe I have as good a right to ordain as to administer the Lord's Supper.*" When we supplement these words by the historical fact that, in the Churches of France, Geneva, Italy, Germany, Hungary, Bohemia, Moravia, Denmark, Sweden, and Scotland—in other words, in nine-tenths of the Protestant world—ministerial orders have been presbyterial in their origin, and in those in which episcopacy has existed it began by presbyters selecting and ordaining presbyters to the episcopal office, the conduct of Mr. Wesley is fully vindicated by the Scriptures and the voice of ecclesiastical history.

Chapter XX.

Dr. White's Intended Visit to Mr. Wesley—Did Mr. Wesley Decline to See Him?—Ignorance of his Character—No Hasty Action and No Stubborn Perseverance—The Letter—"The Plan"—Mr. Wesley's Side of the Case—The Sunday of the Consecration—The Author of the "Blue Laws of Connecticut"—Seeks to Become a Bishop—A Canon Adopted on his Account—Variety of Charges Against Dr. Coke.

THE account which Dr. White gives of his intended visit to Mr. Wesley in 1787 is designed to produce the impression that Mr. Wesley had acted hastily in ordaining Dr. Coke, but was too proud or too headstrong to acknowledge his error. Intending to adhere to his course, right or wrong, he refused to converse with any one concerning it; and especially with an American he desired to have no interview. This is the construction which the reader will be apt to place upon the following statement:

"Perhaps it may not be foreign to the present subject to take notice," says Dr. White, "that the author, when in England, entertained a desire of seeing the late Mr. John Wesley, with the view of stating to him some circumstances of which he might be uninformed in reference to the design, then lately adopted, of withdrawing the Methodist Societies in America from the communion of the Episcopal Church. Under this idea, there was obtained a letter to him from the Rev. Mr. Pilmoor, which the author left at the house of Mr. Wesley when he was from home: but no notice

was taken of it. Before the author's departure, intending to go on a certain day into the city, he sent to that gentleman a letter by the penny-post, expressing that he would on the same day stop at his house if convenient to him. An answer was received, and is still in possession, the purport of which is that Mr. Wesley was then engaged in a periodical duty of an examination of his Society, but that in the case of a stay of a week or two he would derive pleasure from the interview proposed. As the stay was only ten days after, and the latter part of the time was taken up by the business of the consecration and in returning visits, there was no renewal of the proposal of an interview, especially as doubts were entertained of the delicacy of doing so, the resting of an hour's conversation on the event of a stay of a fortnight longer having very much the appearance of a declining of the visit. This may have arisen from the supposition that the object was to impugn a measure hastily adopted by Mr. Wesley, and not intended to be relinquished."*

Dr. White shows in this instance, as in many others, his lack of information concerning the character of Mr. Wesley. Indirection is one quality of human nature which he never exhibited, because he did not possess it. He who did not fear the face of man would have found the plainest and clearest words in the language to tell Dr. White that he had no desire to listen to his budget of American news. But the candidate for episcopal ordination had been in England since the 20th of November. Why should he, after the lapse of *nine* weeks, become suddenly a man

* *Memoirs*, p. 199.

of haste, that must be seen then or never? If we did not know that Dr. White's success hung upon a thread up to the time mentioned here, we might suppose that he had fixed the day of his departure. But the fact is, that on the day the note was written to Dr. White not one official document had been issued to authorize his ordination by the Archbishop of Canterbury. Mr. Wesley wrote on the 24th, and the next day (the 25th of January) the license was issued.

John Wesley knew that William White was no friend of the Methodists in the United States. *He* had given them no helping hand in the time of their poverty and distress. The man that looked in his youth with an evil eye upon the preaching of Whitefield had no predilection for the gifts of Asbury or his itinerant preachers. The increase of Methodists in Philadelphia caused the communion-table of Dr. White's Church to be visited by members that otherwise would not have known the interior of Christ's Church or St. Paul's. For this reason, the Episcopal pastor lamented the organization of a Methodist Church. But what right had *he* to complain? The shepherd that has no sympathy with the religious life of his flock cannot be surprised if they forsake him to follow those by whose hands they have been fed. Many, the great majority, of those who in the early days of Methodism in America went to the Episcopal churches to receive the Lord's Supper would have been found there under no other circumstances. There was not a particle of sympathy between the masses of the people and the Episcopal pastors.

But it seems to be an extraordinary spirit of presumption that induced Dr. White to believe that Mr.

Wesley did not wish to see *him* because the plan "hastily adopted" "was not intended to be relinquished." The inference that Mr. Wesley might have "relinquished" the plan for the organization of a Church that had nearly doubled its members since its adoption, two years previously, is a remarkable specimen of egotism. From fifteen thousand members, in twenty-eight months the American Methodist Church had grown to twenty-five thousand, when Dr. White proposed to negotiate for an interview with Mr. Wesley, which interview, it is avowed, was intended to induce him to repudiate "the plan."

But let us see what Mr. Wesley did. To the "Facsimiles of Church Documents" we are indebted for the text of Mr. Wesley's letter to Dr. White. It is as follows:

Reverend Sir: I am just now furnished with a line from you, which I answer immediately. I am sorry that I am engaged to set out for Dorking early to-morrow morning. I would have waited on you myself on Saturday or on Monday, but that it is the time appointed for examining our Society, which finds me full employment from morning to night. If you stay a week or two longer in town, to have an hour's conversation with you will be a great pleasure to, reverend sir, your obedient brother and servant,

City Road, Jan. 24, 1787.

JOHN WESLEY.

This letter is certainly open, in one respect, to the construction which Dr. White puts upon it. It is possible to regard it as a polite intimation that Mr. Wesley did not wish to see him. As nine weeks had elapsed since his arrival in England, it is probable that Mr. Wesley had intelligence from America as late as any in Dr. White's possession. That there should be such a long delay in the matter was certainly not favorable to urgency, and Mr. Wesley's

time was precious. But to those who know him only through his writings it is scarcely possible to believe that John Wesley would have dismissed Dr. White with a diplomatic excuse or proposal for an impracticable interview. Dr. White knew nothing of the "examinations" of the Societies, of course, and to him the phrase meant nothing; but to Methodists of later days the term suggests a weary heart work that would not have been lessened by complaints from a far country. Nevertheless, it is not probable, to say the least, that Mr. Wesley intended to refuse an interview, and least of all for the reasons assigned by Dr. White.

The "plan" was not adopted hastily. Four years before its adoption, Mr. Wesley wrote to his brother Charles: "I verily believe I have as good a right to ordain as to administer the Lord's Supper." This was in June, 1780. A few weeks afterward he received a request from America to exercise this power. He pondered the "plan" for more than four years, yet Dr. White says it was hastily adopted. The movements of his grace of Canterbury must have suggested Dr. White's ideas of "haste."

After waiting more than ten weeks, Dr. White was ordained on the 4th of February, 1787, and the next day, February 5th, he left London. But he did not sail from Falmouth before the end of the month. What was he doing all this while? The three weeks spent in England after the ordination, or thirty-one days after Mr. Wesley's note was written, did certainly afford a fair opportunity to hold the desired interview. At all events, he might have informed Mr. Wesley that he would be at home at a given time, and by this means decide the question.

Now let us see Mr. Wesley's side of the case. In his Journal, under date of Jan. 25, 1787, he says: "I went to Dorking, and found a lively and well-established people." This was the visit he mentioned on the day before (Wednesday, Jan. 24) in his note to Dr. White. Under date of Saturday, 27, he says: "I began the heavy work of meeting the classes in London." Of this work he had notified Dr. White, but as the American clergyman had not the slightest idea of Mr. Wesley's meaning, we can only pardon his want of information. After Monday, it seems, and within the one week which was the alternative time mentioned by Mr. Wesley, the venerable man had leisure to hear the reports, now three months old, from America. But Dr. White was too busily engaged, we may suppose, in proving to the Archbishop of Canterbury that *five* clergymen in Pennsylvania were better than *ten* in Connecticut; for so it was. Dr. White received *three* clerical votes for bishop, that number of clergymen being present, and the assent of the two others who were not at the place of meeting.* How many laymen were there we know not; but it must have appeared to the Archbishop of Canterbury as a small affair. After centuries of cultivation, in the midst of a population of a third of a million, to be chosen a bishop of five clergymen and a dozen small, undefined, and nondescript parishes! Dr. White deserved a better fate than this, for among his brethren at that time he had no peer in many respects. But alas the day of small things! Sixty-three ministers and fifteen thousand people had voted for Francis Asbury—the people through their minis-

* Life of Dr. White, p. 116.

ters. And yet the gentleman who represents five clergymen, a runaway Methodist preacher among them, must needs suppose that John Wesley was afraid to meet *him* in discussing the affairs of American Methodists!

The Sunday that Dr. White received the gift of "the succession" at Lambeth Chapel, Mr. Wesley preached as usual, and he records the event as follows: "*Sun., 4.* While I applied the parable of the sower at the new chapel, God was with us of a truth. The stout-hearted trembled, as they did likewise in the evening, while I applied 'Many are called, but few chosen.'" While many seek for signs and omens, may it not appear significant that Methodism should be represented by a gracious revival at the new chapel, City Road, while a variety of ceremonial performances were in progress at Lambeth? When names, titles, genuflections, "albs," "stoles," and ecclesiastical millinery shall absorb our thoughts, and become the one attracting magnet in the visible Church, it may be written over our doors as of others, "Ichabod"—the glory has departed from Israel.

Among the *divertissements* which the pages of Dr. White's "Memoirs" furnish us, is one that is connected with a notorious character—no less a personage than the author of the world-renowned "Blue Laws of Connecticut."

The Rev. Samuel Peters was one of the "missionaries" of the "Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts." He was a Tory, of course, and at the beginning of the war got into trouble with the Sons of Liberty. Those patriotic "Sons" could not suffer such men as Seabury, of Westchester, and

Peters, of Hebron, Conn., to affront the republican sentiment by bitter and imprudent advocacy of the royal cause. Mr. Seabury, as we have already seen, took refuge in the King's army, became a chaplain, and drew his half-pay as late as 1789, five years after he had become an Episcopal bishop.

Mr. Peters did not fare so well. He did his best, however, and ran away to England. He was no sooner there than he wrote a book that is but little read, and yet the slanders contained in it have enjoyed a world-wide celebrity. The book was called a "History of Connecticut," and is noticed in the Annual Register of the year 1781 as follows:

"The 'History of Connecticut' is written in a lively and entertaining, though in a very desultory, manner. It is not destitute of information, and some of the facts and circumstances relative to the States, government, manners, and natural productions of the country, are deserving of attention. But the work would be far more worthy of praise if it were not evidently dictated by a most violent party spirit. This is so flagrant that it must greatly diminish its credit. We know not in what respects we can believe a nameless writer, who cites no authorities, and who is clearly influenced by some personal resentment. In reality, his performance has so much of the nature of a party tract that it does not merit the honorable title of a history." *

Dr. Beardsley's notice of Mr. Peters is brief, and is chiefly remarkable for its moderation: "He retaliated upon his countrymen with his pen; but his writings would have been received with more respect had

*Annual Register, 1781, p. 225.

he restrained his rashness and never embellished them with ludicrous and apocryphal statements.”* These “ludicrous and apocryphal statements” are the particular subjects of quotation among foreigners, some of whom we must credit for an intention to tell the truth about the Americans. As an example, the Bishop of Oxford, in his “History of the Protestant Episcopal Church in America,” makes frequent reference to the work of Mr. Peters. He gives a pretended account of a digest of laws called the “Blue Code;” “so named,” says Bishop Wilberforce, “according to probable conjecture, by the inhabitants of the neighboring settlements from its being written, as it were, in blood.” In this “Blue Code” are numerous statutes applying to all the details of life and manners. Bishop Wilberforce quotes several of these; such as, “No one shall run on the Sabbath-day, or walk in his garden or elsewhere, except reverently to and from meeting; which makes it criminal in a mother to kiss her infant on the Sabbath-day; which strictly forbids the reading of the common prayer, keeping Christmas-day or Saint’s-day, making mince-pies, or playing on any instrument of music except the drum, the trumpet, and the Jew’s-harp.”†

That such a man as the Bishop of Oxford should read Peters’s “Blue Laws” and believe them to be historical is not surprising, for there is a tradition that one of his predecessors, after reading “Gulliver’s Travels,” expressed himself as greatly pleased with the book, but said he had found some things there which he could not believe. Perhaps it would not

* History of the Episcopal Church in Connecticut, vol. i., p. 307.

† History of the Protestant Episcopal Church in America, p. 76.

have given more pain to Mr. Peters than it would have given to Dean Swift if he had been told that there were some incredible things in his book. Mr. Peters forged a code of laws, and did it for the purpose of bringing the people of his native country into derision. Never was a phenomenal liar more successful in creating a party that believed every word of his story. The "long-bow" has been drawn at a venture by many a skilled foreigner, but no man ever equaled Peters in the art of creating monumental falsehoods and making people believe them. To this day the "Blue Laws of Connecticut" are quoted, and the absurdity of the Puritan law-makers has pointed many a moral and adorned many a tale. The author of "The True Blue Laws of Connecticut and New Haven" has given a few names of the authors who were deceived by the forgery of Peters. The list could be multiplied many times over.*

It is indeed one of the most remarkable events in literary history. Macpherson's "Ossian," and Ireland's "Shakespeare," and Chatterton's "Rowley," all had their day, but it was a brief one; and no man of moderate information could be deceived by any pretended discovery or by an invention similar to this "Blue Code." But here we have a work, the offspring of a man without conscience or character, and for a hundred years after the forgery is committed, we find men who pass for men of intelligence and learning who are so profoundly ignorant of the truth that they quote Peters's "Blue Laws" as the genuine production of Puritanic folly.

And this man Samuel Peters, "Rev." Samuel Peters,

*Trumbull: *The True Blue Laws of Connecticut*, p. 35.

the forger of a code of laws which libeled his State and people, became a candidate for the episcopal office in the State of Vermont! The thing appears almost as incredible as his pretended "history." It is true, nevertheless, and the application of "Rev." Samuel Peters for consecration as Bishop of "Verdmont" was the occasion of framing a canon for the Protestant Episcopal Church. This "Rev. Dr." Samuel Peters applied to the Archbishop of Canterbury for consecration. He had the votes of "*all* the Presbyterians, Methodists, and Puritans in the State of Verdmont calling him to be their bishop." But it seems, from the exceedingly stately language of Dr. White,* that there was no clergyman of the Episcopalian faith in the State until the Rev. John Cosins Ogden was sent there by "Dr." Peters to form a "convention." The convention was organized, Mr. Peters thinking, doubtless, that if three would do for a large State like Pennsylvania one would suffice for a little diocese like Vermont. So the "convention" appeared in due form. But his grace of Canterbury would not send any more links of the chain of succession to America.

Mr. Peters applied to the Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church, and they declined to grant his request. "It was this transaction," says Dr. White, "which produced an addition to one of the canons requiring that to entitle the Church in any State to a resident bishop there shall be at least six presbyters residing and officiating therein."†

There are many accusations against Dr. Coke, but none of them reflect upon his moral character. Even the vindictive spirit of Dr. Whitehead could allege

* *Memoirs*, p. 203. † *Ibid.*, p. 204.

only prejudice and personal ambition as serious faults in his character. That Dr. Coke has been misrepresented by Dr. Whitehead, in his "Life of Wesley," there is no doubt whatever; and we have seen some of his charges refuted by the best of testimony.

It is not so easy to repel the charge of excessive ambition. It will depend very much upon the reader's habits of thought, and somewhat upon his natural temperament, whether he will be able to exonerate Dr. Coke from this charge after all the testimony has been examined. If he *was* ambitious, it was to do good. He aspired to high and responsible trusts, but they were not attended with worldly power, nor great emoluments, nor human ease, nor yet with worldly honor.

1. He expected to become the first president of the English and Irish Conferences after Mr. Wesley's death. Perhaps no man was better qualified for the post. He was more intimate with Mr. Wesley than was any other man of equal talents. He knew the plans, understood the methods, and more fully shared the spirit of untiring benevolence of Wesley than did any of his contemporaries. Therefore, in his letter to Dr. Seabury, Dr. Coke was imprudent enough to speak with confidence upon a subject that depended upon a popular election. One hundred men were authorized to decide the question, and they decided it against Dr. Coke. They did not do this to reprove, to condemn, nor even to check him. It was a matter of principle—the exercise of a right dear to them, and of incalculable benefit to their successors. Mr. Wesley had chosen Alexander Mather as a superintendent, *perhaps* with an indistinct reference to a sim-

ilar organization to that in America. He left the Wesleys to their own wisdom under God's providence; but if they chose an episcopal form of government he pointed out the man he preferred, either with or without Dr. Coke. This is mere conjecture, however, for we know that Wesley died entertaining a desire for the adherence of the Methodists to the Church. Only on *one* condition, however, and of that they must be judges. If continuance in the Church embarrassed or retarded the work of God, Mr. Wesley would have them to become independent, and he made every provision for the alternative. The question was a difficult one, but upon the subject of a *successor* to John Wesley there was substantial unanimity. It was impossible; and to prove it so, Alexander Mather and Dr. Coke were both set aside at the Conference of 1791, although both were elected in after years. The purpose was clear, the policy sound, and Dr. Coke's submission dignified and graceful.

2. He has been charged with pragmatism and disingenuous conduct in regard to the letters to Drs. White and Seabury. His judgment was at fault, and he publicly confessed his error many years afterward; but it was his zeal for the Lord's house that had effectually, in this case, eaten up his discretion. No native American could have made Dr. Coke's proposition to Dr. White. No Englishman as familiar as Asbury was with American sentiment could have dreamed of taking such an absurd step. The number of nominal Episcopalians would have been increased, but it was impossible that Methodism should receive the slightest benefit from the proposed union. On the other hand, the Episcopalians would not have received any valuable

addition by the Methodist members and preachers. The members would have counted for something, but two Churches so far apart as these were in doctrine and in discipline would have produced agitation, strife, and ultimate division if they had been combined; and the "wheel within a wheel," the *imperium in imperio*, of Dr. Coke's imagination was a wilder venture than his invasion of the French capital a few years before. But Dr. Coke's *motives* were good. There was no honor to be won by him in such an experiment. The absurdity of his seeking the "apostolical succession" has been shown elsewhere, and there is no room for any *corrupt* motive.

3. He has been charged with defectiveness of judgment so radical in its character as to disqualify him for an important trust. An illustration of this want of prudence is his experiment in Paris. The French Revolution had terminated, as it was thought, in 1791, in the triumph of liberty, and a new era seemed to be dawning in France—a hopeful, joyful era. Protestantism was seemingly invited to enter at the open door. Dr. Coke, fresh from America, unwearied in labors and travels, set out for the French capital. On the way he ordained two French ministers, and took them to Paris. Regarding the fall of the Bastille as the signal for universal tolerance and good-will to men, he proposed to open a church, and proclaim the truth as it is in Jesus. The persons who had written for the Protestant preachers were Englishmen, and the prospect for awakening interest among the French did not seem to be brilliant. Nevertheless, the Doctor took counsel from his hope and zeal, and found a vacant church-building, which he bought for a hun-

dred and twenty pounds sterling. Dr. Coke began to preach in French, and had *six* persons for his audience. Presently the zealous missionary was informed that he was not wanted in Paris, and some hints of the uses of lamp-posts in that city were given to his preachers. Discretion came at last. The trade for the church was rescinded, and Dr. Coke retired from the unfruitful field. It is impossible to repress a smile, while we admire the heroic courage and dauntless spirit of this worthy man. His failure did not dampen his zeal, but only urged him to new enterprises and to more successful ventures. The West Indies presented a rich harvest, and westward the evangelist turned, scattering the seed of the kingdom as he passed, on shipboard and on land.

4. He has been charged with unsteadiness of purpose—resolving to give his life to America and the Americans, and then revoking his promise in favor of England. The truth is, Dr. Coke's temperament was hasty and impetuous, his resolutions soon formed and bravely carried out; but sometimes they were the promptings of generosity rather than the dictates of wisdom. He would have remained in America, and offered to do so because a few injudicious friends on this side of the water gave him advice that was not good for him or the Church. Dr. Coke was not adapted to the work in America. He involved the Southern planters and the young Church in a fruitless quarrel, that could do nobody any good. All parties were powerless to change any thing, and yet Coke proposed to compel changes in the relations of master and slave which were altogether beyond the province of the Church. His continued residence in America would

have increased the friction, and perhaps involved Asbury in serious entanglements. Coke was in his place as an evangelist. As a resident bishop in America he would have been a fire-brand, and his subsequent repentance could have retrieved the errors only partially. His offer to remain was made under the impulse born of bad advice. His final decision came from the mature wisdom of the American Conference and his own better judgment. His English friends could not lose him, and all parties were content to let him stay in England. Methodism in Europe had an imperative need of such a man as he, and the cause of missions received from his labors an impetus which only the great day of revelation can fully measure.

5. He is charged with Quixotism in trying to bring about a union of the Wesleyans and the Church of England in 1799; as if *he* could do what John Wesley had failed to do! The correspondence is instructive. It is between "T. Coke," "B. London," and "J. Cantuar." Thomas Coke informs "B. London" that he has nourished an inclination for some time past to write to him on the subject of "securing the great body of Methodists in connection with the late Rev. John Wesley to the Church of England." He tells the Bishop of London that there are between eighty and ninety thousand communicants and half a million of hearers among the Methodists. These are friends of the Church, but he dreads their "prejudice against receiving the Lord's Supper from immoral clergymen." "The word immoral," he says, "they take in a very extensive sense—as including all those who frequent card-tables, balls, horse-racing, theaters, and other places of fashionable amusement." He says

that he has argued in vain to prove that "the validity of the ordinance does not depend upon the piety or even the morality of the minister." These hard-headed English Methodists would not be persuaded. "A considerable number" had deviated from the Established Church, and demanded the ordinances at the hands of pious men. He proposes to cure this defect by having Methodist preachers "ordained" in the Establishment to serve the people that will not have immoral ministers. He confesses that he himself had been somewhat alienated from the Church of England "in consequence of my visiting the States of America; but like a bow too much bent, I have again returned. But I return with a full conviction that our numerous Societies in America would have been a regular Presbyterian Church if Mr. Wesley and myself had not taken the steps which we judged necessary to adopt." *

This is an important acknowledgment, but needs an explanation. Presbyterians in government the early Methodists might have been in the one point of an elder as president or moderator, but not otherwise. In doctrine the American Methodists have been stanch Arminians from the beginning, and have conquered their present vantage-ground only by the itinerant system and destructive warfare upon the Westminster Confession. Wesley eliminated the Calvinism of the Thirty-nine Articles, and gave to America a pure Confession of Faith, explicit, sufficiently inclusive, and thoroughly scriptural.

Returning to Coke's correspondence, we find no specific recommendation further in regard to holding the

* Etheridge: *Life of Coke*, p. 385.

Wesleyans to the Church. Beilby Porteus, the same prelate who had administered the castigation to the "Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts" because they refused to preach to their own West Indian slaves, received Dr. Coke's letter kindly, courteously. He pronounced the object desirable, and promised to converse with the two archbishops about it. In a fortnight the high and mighty prelate of the Church, "J. Cantuar.," condescended to write to Dr. Coke. The substance of his reply will be found in this remarkable sentence: "We cannot but lament that persons of a religious and serious turn of mind should be likely to be separated from our communion by an ill opinion of our clergy which we think ill founded, and upon a principle erroneous and not to be admitted were the opinion true."*

The "persons of a religious and serious turn of mind" have settled the problem which Dr. Etheridge states at the time of his writing arrested the attention of ecclesiastical men. At the Conference of 1882 these "persons," numbering nearly half a million of communicants—probably a larger number than the communicants of the Establishment—have at last become an independent Church. They have adopted the articles of religion prepared for the American Methodists by Mr. Wesley, and henceforth they will be known as the *Wesleyan Methodist Church!* The time may come when, face to face with disestablishment, the "J Cantuar.," and "B. London," and "T. York" of the period may read their episcopal brother's contemptuous letter with feelings of regret.

But in any case Dr. Coke had acted unwisely, as it

* Etheridge: *Life of Coke*, p. 388.

seems to us in America. It is painful to read of such an expenditure of self-respect in a whimsical enterprise. "J. Cantuar." cared not for the progress of the Methodists; why should he? Dependence upon public opinion is the only monitor for men in office, whether in Church or State. Secure in all respects, the gentlemen who change their surnames for their "sees" sleep calmly on, and only the fate of the Irish Church will be likely to arouse them from their slumber.

6. Dr. Coke has been charged with publishing attacks upon private character, in which unworthy motives are attributed to those whom he recognized as his friends. There is but one specification under this charge. The allusion is to the offense given by Dr. Coke to Mr. Jarratt by the publication of a "Journal" in the *Arminian Magazine* of 1789. In his "Life and Times of Rev. Jesse Lee" the usually accurate biographer, Dr. Leroy M. Lee, says: "In 1789 Dr. Coke and Mr. Jarratt met in North Carolina. In a brief interview the subject of slavery was introduced and discussed. Subsequently Dr. Coke published his Journal in the *Arminian Magazine* for the year, and introduced the conversation referred to. The reference is a very brief one, and alleges the ownership of twenty-four slaves by Mr. Jarratt as the ground of his opposition to the measures sought to be carried out by himself."*

The statement of Dr. Lee is not correct, and the error, although apparently slight, is of real importance to the defense of Dr. Coke. It was not the conversation of 1789 that was published in the *Arminian Magazine* of that year. If it had been so, Mr. Jarratt

* Life and Times of Rev. Jesse Lee, p. 391.

would have had very serious cause for complaint; for they had held more than one interview under Mr. Jarratt's roof. But the facts are these: In the *Arminian Magazine* for May, 1789, was begun the "Journal of Thomas Coke, Bishop of the Methodist Episcopal Church." The Journal begins September 18th, 1784, and continues to June 3d, 1785. The installment printed in July, 1789, contains the offensive paragraph, under date of "Wednesday [March], 30 [1785]. *Roanoke Chapel*. I found in this chapel a serious, attentive people. Here I met with Mr. Jarratt. After duty, he went with me to one Brother Seward's, in the State of Virginia, about eight miles off. We now talked largely on the minutes concerning slavery, but he would not be persuaded. The secret is, he has twenty-four slaves of his own; but I am afraid he will do infinite hurt by his opposition to our Rules."*

This is the passage alluded to by Dr. Lee, and it was written at the first meeting of Dr. Coke and Mr. Jarratt in March, 1785, and not in 1789. It would have been extraordinary indeed if Dr. Coke, immediately after the conversation, had committed it to the press. But the Journal was a record of Dr. Coke's travels from the time he embarked for America, in September, 1784, until his return to England in June, 1785. It was not published until 1789, and the offensive paragraph would have been expunged, doubtless, if the writer could have overlooked the proofs, or if he had been favored with more leisure to correct and revise his manuscript. But he was in England when the July number of the magazine appeared in Philadelphia. He did not return to America until Febru-

**Arminian Magazine*, July, 1789, p. 342.

ary, 1791. Learning that his publication had given offense to Mr. Jarratt, he wrote a letter of apology in April, and had an interview with Mr. Jarratt. To this letter of apology he refers in his letter to Dr. White on the 24th of April, 1791.

The publication was a just cause of offense to Mr. Jarratt, and the imprudence of Dr. Coke is not defensible. But, admitting the impropriety of the attack, let it be considered that it was the first impression, hastily noted down and thoughtlessly given to the press by a man who was scarcely in any one place for two days together, and the error will be softened by these conditions, although there is no apology for the publication. The writer of the Journal and the subject of the attack met together afterward as Christian men, the one confessing his fault and the other freely forgiving it.

7. Lastly, Dr. Coke is charged with deserting both American and British Methodism, to whom he owed so much. He proposed to the English Government that he should be consecrated a bishop of the Church of England! This is the keenest arrow in the quiver of Dr. Coke's enemies. It is a charge which, on the face of it, declares him a traitor to Methodism, and in any view of it requires candid examination by his friends as well as those who have no interests involved in the issue. The importance of the subject justifies the insertion of Dr. Coke's account of this enterprise. In a letter to William Wilberforce he makes the following statement:

"A subject which appears to me of great moment lies much upon my mind, yet it is of such a delicate nature that I cannot venture to open my mind upon

it to any one of whose candor, piety, delicacy, and honor I have not the highest opinion. Such a character I do indubitably esteem you, sir; and as such I will run the risk of opening my whole heart to you upon the point.

“For at least twelve years the interests of our Indian Empire have lain very near my heart. In several instances I have made attempts to open a way for missions in that country, and even for my going over there myself; but every thing proved abortive.

The Lord has been pleased to fix me for about thirty-seven years on a point of great usefulness. My influence in the large Wesleyan Connection, the introduction and superintendence of our missions in different parts of the globe, and the wide sphere opened to me for the preaching of the gospel to almost innumerable large and attentive congregations, have opened to me a very extensive field for usefulness; and yet I could give up all for India. Could I but close my life in being the means of raising a spiritual Church in India, it would satisfy the utmost ambition of my soul here below.

“I am not so much wanted in our Connection at home as I was. Our Committee of Privileges, as we term it, can watch over the interests of the body in respect to law and government as well in my absence as if I were with them. Our Missionary Committee in London can do the same in respect to missions, and my absence would only make them feel their duty more incumbent upon them. Auxiliary committees through the nation (which we now have in contemplation) will amply supply my place in raising money. There is nothing to influence me much against going to

India but my extensive sphere for preaching the gospel; but this, I do assure you, sir, sinks considerably in my calculation in comparison of the high honor—if the Lord was to confer it upon me in his providence and grace—of beginning or reviving a genuine work of religion in the immense regions of Asia.

“Impressed with these views, I wrote a letter about a fortnight ago to the Earl of Liverpool. After an introduction drawn up in the most delicate manner in my power, I took notice of the observations made by Lord Castlereagh in the House of Commons concerning a religious establishment in India connected with the Established Church at home. I then simply opened my situation in the Wesleyan Connection as I have stated to you above. I enlarged on the earnest desire I had of closing my life in India, observing that if his Royal Highness the Prince Regent and the Government should think proper to appoint me their bishop in India, I should most cheerfully and gratefully accept of the offer. I observed that I should, in case of my appointment to the episcopacy of India, return most fully into the bosom of the Established Church, and do every thing in my power to promote its interests, and would submit to all such restrictions in the fulfillment of my office as the Government and Bench of Bishops at home should think necessary; that my prime motive was to be useful to the Europeans in India, and that my second—though not the least—was to introduce the Christian religion among the Hindoos by the preaching of the gospel, and perhaps also by the establishment of schools.

“When I was in some doubt this morning whether I ought to take the liberty of writing to you, my mind

became determined on my being informed about three hours ago that in a letter received from you by Mr. Hey you observed that the generality of the House of Commons were set against granting any thing of an imperative kind to the Dissenters or Methodists in favor of sending missionaries to India.

“I am not conscious that the least degree of ambition influences me in this business. I possess a fortune of about £1,200 a year, which is sufficient to bear my traveling expenses and enable me to make many charitable donations. I have lost two dear wives, and am now a widower. Our leading friends through the Connection receive me with the utmost respect and hospitality. I am quite surrounded by friends who greatly love me. But India still cleaves to my heart. I sincerely believe that my strong inclination to spend the remainder of my life in India originates in the Divine will, whilst I am called upon to use the secondary means to obtain the end.”

To render this letter intelligible, it is necessary to observe that the English Government had under consideration a proposition to establish a bishopric in India. The spirit of missions had not been awakened, but the large number of Englishmen in public employments under the East India Company demanded a complete Church establishment. They were in the condition of the American colonies, and sought relief. Dr. Coke saw the matter from a higher and more important point of view. He contemplated the conversion of the heathens in India. His soul was eminently of a missionary cast, and he longed for a place of corresponding power in which to wield his influence for the gospel. A bishopric in India is not

now one of the most desirable posts in the Church, much less was it likely to be considered at that time an object of ambition. Nevertheless, Dr. Coke had no *pretensions* to the place. He had nothing but *qualifications*, and these are not often considered.

More than one hundred years before Dr. Coke wrote this letter to the English minister, Dr. Humphrey Prideaux, Dean of Norwich, addressed a letter to Archbishop Tennison in behalf of the pagans of India. The Dean of Norwich, in 1695, regretted that the East India Company's charter did not require them to "maintain a school and a Church for the benefit of the *Indian* inhabitants."* But governments and corporations are not easily influenced in the direction of religious and moral reforms. Thus the matter slept in the dignified bosom of the State Church until Dr. Coke disturbed the official slumber by a Quixotic letter.

The impetuous Doctor seems to have forgotten that he had any enemies. He boasted to Wilberforce of his friendship with Lord Eldon, Lord Sidmouth, Lord Castlereagh, and Lord Bathurst, and others. But what did that avail? Those gentlemen were as little at liberty to make their own selections for the places of honor and trust as a President of the United States can be. Inexorable political necessities shape all the appointments in a constitutional monarchy and a republic alike. So that Dr. Coke, who had spent his life in promoting the interests of non-conformity, had not the remotest chance of obtaining a bishopric in India; but he did better than that. He lies entombed in the secret caves of the Indian Ocean, where the

* Life of Dr. Prideaux, p. 151.

waves will sing his requiem as long as the days and years shall go by into the depths of eternity.

Dr. Coke sailed for India, and having projected a mission for the island of Ceylon, accompanied by seven Wesleyan ministers, he embarked his fortune in the venture, and died at sea on the 3d of May, 1813.

NOTE.—In the excellent biography of Dr. Coke by Dr. Etheridge is an erroneous statement, in which the author has blended two independent facts. Speaking of Dr. Coke's letter and proposition for the union of the Methodist and Episcopal Churches, Dr. Etheridge says: "White, who appears to have been a man of excellent disposition and as a Churchman moderate in his ecclesiastical principles, would have been willing to concur in the overture; but the 'Convention,' or yearly synod, of the Protestant Episcopal Church, before which it was shortly discussed, were not disposed to acquiesce in the terms propounded by Coke, and the scheme, whether a good or a bad one, fell to the ground." (Life of Coke, p. 310.) There is a serious mistake in this statement. It is undoubtedly true that Dr. White's reply to Dr. Coke expressed approval of the proposed plan of union, subsequent denials to the contrary notwithstanding. But the plan was never made known to the Convention, and consequently there was no expression of opinion on their part upon the subject. The letters were written in April and May, 1791, and Dr. Coke left for Europe on the same day that he wrote to Dr. Seabury. No answer was received from the latter, and the correspondence was never renewed. It was the proposition of Bishop Madison to unite the Episcopal and Methodist Churches that was made known to the Protestant Episcopal Convention in 1792, and received no encouragement from that body because it gave no promise of success and tended to weaken public confidence in the stability of the Protestant Episcopal Church.

Chapter XXI.

Anglican Orders Denied—Romanist Test—Canon Raynal—Ordinal of Edward VI.—Fatally Defective in the Form of Ordination for a Hundred Years—No Difference Between Priest and Bishop—Irregularities in the Protestant Episcopal Church—Omission of Essential Words—Can a Bishop Resign?—Hobart, Provoost, and Moore—Three Bishops in the same Diocese—White's Treatment of Bishop Griswold—Character of Griswold—Burnet on Lay Baptism—Dodwell—A Question that has Never been Settled—Rejected, There is no Episcopacy—Accepted, There is no Apostolical Succession.

IT is not generally known in America that the controversy between the Anglicans and the Romanists concerning the validity of the ministerial orders of the Church of England is still in progress. While the High-churchmen in the United States are exerting themselves to the utmost to prove that American Methodists have no Church, no ministry, and no sacraments, the Roman Catholics are similarly employed with regard to the Church of England. When Bishop Ives, of North Carolina, resigned his office in the Protestant Episcopal Church and became a Roman Catholic, he lapsed into the ranks as a *layman*. If a Roman Catholic priest should enter the Protestant Episcopal Church his orders as a minister are recognized, and he is not ordained anew. Rome denies to the Protestant Episcopal Church the status of a Church of Christ, but the Church of Rome is acknowledged by Episcopalians to be a true Church. This gives to

Rome an immense advantage. *She* confesses no equality, no fraternity.

The work of the Rev. Dr. Lee on the "Validity of Holy Orders in the Church of England" has been answered by "Dom Wilfrid Raynal, O.S.B., Canon Penitentiary of Newport and Menevia." This answer, entitled "The Ordinal of King Edward VI.," is a fine specimen of logic, without regard to the merits of the question at issue. The Romanist deals with apparent frankness, and admits that Dr. Lee has made the ordination of Archbishop Parker "much more probable than it seemed to be before the publication of his work." * But the Canon contends that "the sole point at issue will then be whether the episcopate could be validly conferred when the consecrator used the form contained in the Edwardine Ordinal, which was annexed to the Book of Common Prayer in the year 1552. This is the vital question of the controversy, for without a valid form no sacrament can be administered, and no character can be impressed in baptism, confirmation, and holy orders. If Parker did not receive the episcopal character because the form used by the consecrator was invalid, not only was he himself no bishop, but the whole lineage of the Anglican hierarchy has never possessed that character, descended as it was for a hundred years by the same invalid form." †

A controversy between two prelatists is always interesting to a reader who indorses both and agrees with neither. In so far as the Romanist destroys the prelatical claims of the Anglican, the true Protestant indorses his argument if it be well stated. But when the Anglican overthrows the mighty fabric of Roman

* Ordinal of King Edward VI., p. 2. † Ibid., p. 3.

superstition, we cannot fail to wish him God-speed. According to the theory of the Romanist, every sacrament consists of the matter and the form. These are the terms in use "since the thirteenth century, instead of the patristic *res et verba*." * The Canon proceeds to show that the matter of ordination is the *imposition* of hands, and that *prayer* is its form. "Since Catholics and Anglicans are agreed as to the matter, our whole attention must be directed to the form." He then proceeds to show, by the usual methods of Romanist logic, which *prove* a little and *assume* a great deal, that tradition has brought down from the days of the apostles, through the Roman See, the true sacramental forms of holy orders.

We are not interested in the various steps by which this author arrives at his conclusion, but the conclusion itself is of some importance. "The Presbyterians of the seventeenth century were not well versed in theology," says Canon Raynal, "but they belonged to a race of quick-sighted men, who soon detected the inconsistencies of others. Hence, in their polemical works against the Anglican Church they called upon her openly to avow her denial of the powers of the episcopate, since, in the ordination of her clergy, she had invariably used forms which established no distinction between the episcopacy and the priesthood. Burnet was frank enough to record this objection, and to admit that it was well founded. In his 'History of the Reformation' he narrates the revision of the Ordinal, and says: 'They agreed on a form of ordaining deacons, priests, and bishops, which is the same we yet (*i. e.*, A.D. 1683) use, except in some few words

* Ordinal of King Edward VI., p. 39.

that have been added since in the ordination of a priest or bishop. *For there was then no express mention made in the words of ordaining them that it was for the one or other office.' "**

Now this is an important fact. For one hundred years of her existence the Church of England, in her form of ordination, made no difference between a presbyter and a bishop. From the words used by the ordainer himself no man could tell whether the person consecrated was set apart to the ministry in the order of elders or presbyters, or set apart as a superintendent or bishop of a diocese. The importance of the fact does not belong to the subject in itself, for there was distinction enough between the two ceremonies; but the fact is, that the *form* of the ordination is the specific act by which ministerial authority is bestowed, according to High-churchmen as well as Romanists; and if this form be defective, the whole service is a nullity. It is upon this basis that Canon Raynal places the conclusion of his book, that all the orders of the Church of England are void for want of definiteness, lacking "the '*principium determinationis*' which serves to specify the imposition of hands." †

We pronounce judgment in this case, not according to our own views of the rite of ordination, but in accordance with the rigid requirements of the "apostolical successionists;" and by these requirements ministerial authority in the Church of England ceased to exist more than three hundred years ago. It is true that the Romanist can as little afford to have his own system tested by these rules as the Anglican sacramentarian, but the Romanist can always take refuge

* Ordinal of King Edward VI., p. 163. † Ibid., p. 171.

in the Pope, the fountain of plenary power. No such recourse is open to the High-churchman. If his system falls before the ax of logic, he perishes with it; for his system is his pope, his strong tower, his defense against the world.

But the history of the Protestant Episcopal Church had not completed its first quarter of a century before vitiating irregularities made their appearance. Of these perhaps the most important in a technical sense occurred in 1811 at the ordination of Bishop Hobart, of New York. Nominally there were six bishops of the Church, but one of these, Provoost, had resigned his office. Bishop Claggett was too ill to reach the Convention. Bishop Moore had been afflicted with a stroke of paralysis, and Bishop Madison, of Virginia, had bound himself, *under the solemnity of an oath*,* not to leave William and Mary College. This was certainly a remarkable state of affairs. Twenty-four years after the "succession" had been borrowed from England it seemed about to expire under the multiplied afflictions of paralytic strokes, a resignation, and an oath to a board of college trustees! There was a serious and well-founded apprehension, says Bishop White, that the American Church would be compelled to have recourse the second time to the mother Church for the episcopacy, or proceed without the "canonical number." The meeting was in New Haven, and two new candidates were waiting to be ordained bishops. The conduct of Bishop Madison seems to be inexplicable. No duties of a college president would forbid his absence for a few days upon the business of the Church. Admitting the fact that he had taken an

* White's Memoirs, p. 248.

oath not to leave the college, had he not taken a previous oath, one of the most solemn vows that man can record in earth or heaven, to serve the Church of the living God? It is astonishing that Bishop White should have no words of censure in this case. He has left on record his belief that Whitefield's itinerant ministry was inconsistent with his moral obligation to obey his diocesan.* He impeached the *moral honesty* of Whitefield because he, like Wesley, took the world for his parish; but this man, who takes the oath of a bishop, then forsakes his flock, hides himself within the walls of a secluded seminary, and binds himself by an oath *not* to discharge the duties which he has voluntarily promised to perform—for the delinquent bishop there is not a word of reproof! Is it charity that seals his lips and forestalls his pen?

But so it was: Dr. White and Dr. Jarvis were the only bishops present. Dr. White had, three years before, debated some time with himself as to whether *one* bishop could make a "House," and it seems he left the question undetermined. But if there was a "House of Bishops" present at this time, there were not enough to ordain, "canonically," another. Dr. Hobart—young, vigorous, full of war, breathing out fire and tempest upon all opponents of High-church principles—and the meek, patient, evangelical Dr. Griswold, the plebeian shoe-maker from Connecticut, were sent forward to receive episcopal ordination. Bishops White and Jarvis, together with the candidates, adjourned from New Haven to New York City to meet Dr. Provoost. But why not Bishop Moore? We cannot tell. Surely it could not have been a mat-

*Life of White, p. 24.

ter of *choice*, for Dr. Provoost had *resigned* his office. The reader, who may be acquainted with the singular proceedings of these conventions, may recall the fact that the "House of Bishops" in 1804 had declared that Bishop Provoost *could not* resign his episcopal jurisdiction. Such a resignation was not "consistent with ecclesiastical order, or with the practice of Episcopal Churches in any ages, or with the tenor of the office of consecration."* Nevertheless, the diocesan convention passed a series of resolutions the next year, declaring that Dr. Provoost *had* resigned his episcopal jurisdiction, and from the time that his resignation had been accepted, in 1801, he had ceased to be bishop of the diocese of New York. Here, then, was the diocese of New York in antagonism with the House of Bishops—no great matter in itself, but the result of this antagonism was important in many ways. Dr. Hobart was to be assistant to Dr. Moore, and Dr. Moore had taken the place of Dr. Provoost. Now Dr. Provoost was requested to assist in the ordination of a man whose election was to work his own exclusion from the episcopate in the diocese. If the bishops were right, Dr. Provoost was still the real diocesan, and Dr. Moore his assistant. What, then, in this case, was Dr. Hobart? *Three* bishops in one diocese had not been known in modern times, and it was, beyond question, "uncanonical" to have an assistant to an assistant, while the real original diocesan was clamoring for reinstatement in his office. Perhaps a similar entanglement has never puzzled the doctors of the "canon" law.

But the question was, What is the status of Dr.

* *Memoirs of the Church*, p. 419.

Provoost? He either is, or he is not, bishop of the diocese. If the episcopal order is indelible, he cannot resign, and he is therefore, in coöperating in the ordination of Dr. Hobart, helping to create an officer unknown to ecclesiastical law. If Dr. Provoost is not the diocesan, he is not a bishop at all; for a bishop without a diocese is a head without a body. If he is not the diocesan, and is not, therefore, a true bishop, how can he "canonically" participate in the consecration of a bishop? Dr. Jarvis, one of the parties in this proceeding, proposed to prove in one of his tracts that the English Church was *autocephalous*, but here we have a *tricephalous* body! An amputated head unites with a disabled head to create a third head!

Surely here were difficulties enough for one session, but Dr. White proceeded to increase the number. In the *form* of consecration of Dr. Hobart and Dr. Griswold, Bishop White omitted the words "In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." The Romanist canon would say that this omission rendered the so-called ordination null and void, and there were not a few High-churchmen whom Dr. Hobart had helped to educate into the same views. A "political justice" met Dr. Hobart on the threshold of his labors. "He found himself stopped, as it were, on the threshold," says his biographer, "threatened by an opposition in which doctrinal opinions and personal hostility were mingled up with vague and wide-spread doubts as to the validity both of the principle and manner of his consecration."* He had more to do with creating the High-church sentiment than any man in the Church. He was a man of war, and un-

* Life of Hobart, p. 213.

sheathed the sword of controversy with a courage which many admired who did not approve of his principles. Even the patriarch of the Church, Dr. White, is said by the Bishop of Oxford to have had his Churchmanship developed and rendered more "pronounced" by the fiery young orator of New York.*

The associate of Dr. Hobart in the parish of Trinity Church entered the field with a "Solemn Appeal to the Church" against Dr. Hobart and his ordination. Following the Rev. Cave Jones in his assault upon the new bishop came the application of Dr. Provoost for reinstatement in the work of the diocese! Nor were these all of the complications in the case. Perhaps

*The alarm created by the omission of the essential words in the ceremony of ordination was very great. A pamphlet appeared with the title, "Serious thoughts on a late administration of episcopal orders, submitted to the calm reflection of the bishops of the Protestant Episcopal Church, with a postscript in answer to Dr. Bowden's Essentials of Ordination Stated." In this pamphlet the author appeals to the recognized authorities in the High-church party. The conclusion of the argument is forcibly presented: "Suppose that at some future period, when the heat of passion is allayed, when calm reflection is suffered to be called into exercise, that then it shall be found and acknowledged that the considerations here advanced have weight, and that the consecration is attended with an essential defect; what will then be the state of our Church? Our priesthood *invalid*, our succession *lost*, numbers, under a show of ordination, ministering without authority; the evil so extended as to be beyond the power of correction." "For myself, I am seriously and conscientiously persuaded that the omission of the *solemn words* is material, that it is essential, that it renders the whole form besides an utter nullity." (Quoted in Smyth's Apostolical Succession, p. 220.)

This is the judgment of an Episcopal writer of that day, and, arguing from the premises of a High-churchman, no other conclusion is possible.

the incident to be related will account for the phenomenal omission by the presiding bishop on the occasion of the ordination. Dr. Griswold was the senior candidate. He was an older man than Dr. Hobart, and had been elected twelve months earlier. By all the precedents, as well as proprieties of the case, Dr. Griswold was entitled to priority in "the laying on of hands." But the first man that was ordained would become eventually the presiding bishop, and Dr. White had his reasons for preferring Dr. Hobart for that position.* The reason assigned by Dr. White was that Dr. Hobart was, at that time, a Doctor of Divinity, while his Brother Griswold was not!

The defense of this action was a reference to the custom in England, where precedency is accorded, not to seniority in age, but to priority of date in university degrees. If this reason was adequate to the case, it ought to have excluded Mr. Griswold, for he had no university degrees at all! This excuse is pronounced by the biographer of Bishop Griswold to be insufficient. "It is not easy to conceive that, under the very peculiar circumstances of the case, he would have given that reason a *governing* weight had not his mind, unconsciously to itself no doubt, felt the pressure of a strong feeling in action about him, and moving him in the direction which the service of consecration took."†

The tenderness of this writer for Dr. White is almost equal to the diplomatic suavity of the venerable Bishop of Pennsylvania. Dr. Hobart was a sectarian of uncompromising character. He would have nothing to do with the American Bible Society, but advo-

* Life of Bishop Griswold, p. 165. † Ibid., p. 167.

cated "Bible and Prayer-book" societies. He was excessively afraid of revival excitements, and detested prayer-meetings and the like. He was a noisy High-churchman, and soon had the religious world in a ferment by reason of his pragmatical essays, sermons, and speeches. His "Churchianity" was offensive to many. The policy of arraying all the denominations in the country against the weakest one among them was a doubtful experiment. It was, however, the necessary result of Dr. Hobart's crusade against the Churches, that the non-Episcopalians were aroused to a thorough examination of the pretensions which the "successionists" made. No evil can come of the investigation of truth in any department of knowledge. Given a spirit of charity and an earnest desire to know the truth, there need be no fears as to the issue. Both parties will be confident in the opinions they have advocated; but after the smoke and din of the battle-field have passed away, victory will be found somewhere. If the prelatical party has carried the day, the advantage will belong to them; and their growth, compared with their opponents, will be manifest in due season.

Bishop Griswold had no taste for these controversies. He was a good man, well versed in the sacred Scriptures, believed that the work of saving souls and the prosperity of the Church were the same, and he had no sympathy with the High-church party. "Some are unwilling to distribute the Bible without the Prayer-book," he said some years afterward, "alleging as a reason that the *Church* of God should go with the *Word* of God. This, however, implies that there is a Church not to be found in the Bible."* This was a

* Life of Griswold, p. 577.

fatal concession, which Dr. Hobart could not see. There were a few objections to his course, but in the end the bishop of the diocese of New England laid a better, broader, stronger foundation for his Church than that projected by the restless New Yorker. When Puseyism showed its head in his diocese, Bishop Griswold aimed such sturdy blows at the pitiful imitation of Romanism that it fell to trouble him no more. On the other hand, the son-in-law of Bishop Hobart, Dr. Ives, of North Carolina, followed the teachings of the High-church party until he arrived at the Vatican, and remained there a pervert to Rome.

The agitation caused by the knight-errantry of Bishop Hobart recalled the questions which once perplexed the minds of English Churchmen. "Another conceit was taken up," says Bishop Burnet, giving the origin of extreme High-church views in the days of Queen Anne, "of the validity of lay baptism, on which several books have been writ; nor was the dispute a trifling one, since by this notion the teachers among the Dissenters, passing for laymen, this went to the rebaptizing them and their congregations.

"Dodwell gave rise to this conceit. He was a very learned man, and led a strict life. He seemed to hunt after paradoxes in all his writings, and broached not a few. He thought none could be saved but those who, by the sacraments, had a federal right to it, and that these were the seals of the covenant; so that he left all who died without the sacraments to the uncovenanted mercies of God, and to this he added that none had the right to give but those who were commissioned to it; and these were the apostles, and after them bishops and priests ordained by them. It fol-

lowed upon this that sacraments administered by others were of no value. He pursued these notions so far that he asserted that the souls of men were naturally mortal, but that the immortalizing virtue was conveyed by baptism given by persons episcopally ordained. And yet, after all this, which carried the episcopal function so high, he did not lay the origin of that government on any instruction or warrant in the Scripture, but thought it was set up in the beginning of the second century, after the apostles were all dead. This strange and precarious system was in great credit among us, and the necessity of the sacrament, and the invalidity of ecclesiastical functions, when performed by persons who were not episcopally ordained, were entertained by many with great applause. This made the Dissenters pass for no Christians, and put all thoughts of reconciling them to us far out of view. And several little books were spread about the nation to prove the necessity of rebaptizing them, and that they were in a state of damnation till that was done; but few were, by these arguments, prevailed upon to be rebaptized. This struck even at the baptism by midwives in the Church of Rome, which was practiced and connived at here in England till it was objected to in the conference held at Hampton Court, soon after King James the First's accession to the crown; and baptism was not till then limited to persons in orders. Nothing of this kind was so much as mentioned in the year 1660, *when a great part of the nation had been baptized by Dissenters*; but it was now promoted with much heat."*

Thus we find the origin of the doctrines which were

* Burnet: History of His Own Time, vol. iv., p. 370.

advocated with so much zeal by Bishop Hobart. He was not a theologian, and did not see the fatal consequences of his theories, for there were in his own diocese palpable illustrations of the absurdity of his exclusive views. Bishop Provoost had been baptized by a Presbyterian minister, and was never rebaptized after he became an Episcopalian. According to the High-church theory he was not a Christian, although a *bishop* of a Christian Church! But the reader will not be startled at this proposition when he learns that, in the creed of a High-churchman, it is not necessary to be a Christian, *even in form*, in order to be a bishop! Bishop White states that, according to the doctrine of the High-churchman, "the succession" may be handed down by *unbaptized heathens*,* and the Bishop of Oxford regrets that unbaptized laymen have represented the Church in America in its highest legislature!† If men may be bishops and law-makers who are not members of the Christian Church, even by virtue of the initiatory rite of baptism administered by *any* hand, what is the value of the sacraments, and what is the Church itself?

Bishop Burnet informs us that the extravagances of Dodwell and his party brought the Episcopal Bench into consultation in order to check the insensate controversy. "The *bishops* thought it necessary," he says, "to put a stop to this new and extravagant doctrine, so a declaration was agreed to, first against the irregularity of all baptism by persons who were not in holy orders, but that yet, according to the practice of the primitive Church and the constant usage

* Memoirs, p. 252. † History of the Protestant Episcopal Church in America, p. 252.

of the Church of England, no baptism (in or with water, in the name of the Father, the Son, and Holy Ghost) ought to be reiterated." * The Archbishop of Canterbury, and all of the bishops except one, joined in this declaration; and it was carried to the Lower House of Convocation, where it was not taken up for consideration up to the time that venerable and useless institution, the Convocation itself, was abolished by royal mandate.

But the question of "lay baptism" is not decided by "premitting" it. The subject is too important to be dismissed with a sneer. Dr. White is decidedly in favor of admitting the validity of lay baptism, for without it "*there would be no certainty of the existence of a bishop in Christendom.*" † This is the heart of the matter. According to the High-church doctrine "lay baptism" is invalid, and for that reason we affirm, with Dr. White, that it cannot be proved that a bishop of the "apostolical succession" exists; but it is a poor argument to say we cannot admit your premises, for, if we do, our theory is disproved. The question is not whether the denial of lay baptism will do this or that, or have this or that consequence, but is lay baptism valid in the light of the Bible, reason, and the economy of the kingdom of Christ. If it is not valid, the fact that the result is destructive to our party is not the fault of the doctrine, but of the party that rejected it. If it is valid, let us be careful that proper guards are placed about it, lest the liberty of the kingdom of heaven be transformed into the license of the prince of this world of darkness.

* Burnet: History of His Own Time, vol. iv., p. 371. † Memoirs, p. 252.

What is lay baptism? It is the administration of the ordinance of baptism by a layman, of course. But what is a *layman*? It is a member of the Christian Church who is not in ministerial orders. Can a man be a layman, in the clerical sense, who is not a *member* of the Church? Of course he cannot. A heathen Chinaman may pronounce the formula of baptism, and use the element for the purpose—both matter and form may be employed—and it is not baptism. Why? Because, if baptism be the door to the kingdom, it must be opened by one who is a citizen of the kingdom, otherwise baptism is a mere collocation of words that work, *ex opere operato*, by their own virtue, the effect designed. This makes a species of magic, of black art, out of the institutions of the Church.

It being settled that a layman is a non-clerical member of the Church, *is a Dissenter a member of the Church?* To say that he is, establishes his baptism, but destroys the barrier between Episcopacy and Presbyterianism. To say that he is not, destroys the baptism and annihilates the apostolical succession. There is no third resort; no choice exists beyond these two results. Now, when we transfer the issue to America, dropping “Dissenter,” because there are no dissenters where there is no State Church, we have the case fairly stated. If the baptism of a Presbyterian minister be valid, it is because he is a lay member of the Church; but he is a member of no Church except the Presbyterian, therefore the Presbyterian is a true Church, because an invalid Church cannot produce a valid baptism. A Church that can give one of the ordinances in a valid form can give them all. If baptism be rightly performed by a layman, the Lord’s Supper

may be celebrated by the same person; and it follows that ministerial orders, being less sacred than divine ordinances, may be rightly administered by a Church that rightly administers the higher and more sacred ordinances and rites of the Lord's house.

There is but one method of disposing of this argument, and it is generally employed. It is simply to take as much of the fact as suits our purpose, and discarding all the rest take refuge from reason in a blind and stolid indifference to logic. "If the prejudice should prevail," says Bishop White, "it is very unfortunate that two of our bishops (Dr. Provoost and Dr. Jarvis) *never received baptism from an Episcopalian administrator*. So that who knows what scruples this may occasion as to the validity of many of our ordinations, and among the number those of the very two gentlemen who made the stir at the late Convention? It is true that to meet this difficulty the distinction is devised of the possibility of transmitting the Episcopal succession through persons who are not members of the Christian Church."* In one of his letters to Bishop Hobart Dr. White shows the consequence of denying "lay baptism." He says: "Suppose that such a man as the ex-Bishop of Autun had taken it into his head during the triumph of atheism to consecrate the officers of those clubs of which we have heard so much from Professor Robinson and the Abbe Baruel, some of whom, if I recollect rightly, assumed the names of the Christian ministry, would such persons be valid bishops, sufficient for the handing down of the succession? I think they would, on Mr. Lawrence's principles; and therefore, before we admit

these principles, let us be aware of what they lead to."*

Did not Dr. White know that he received *his* apostolical succession through as great atheists and unbelievers as the ex-Bishop of Autun? Would a man of honest principles prefer to receive his ecclesiastical authority through the hands of a lecherous murderer, like Alexander VI., or an avowed atheist, like John XXIII., popes of Rome, to those of the apostate Bishop of Autun? Bad as he was, did innocent blood of his own kindred stain his garments? Did he confess to be God's vicegerent on earth, when he denied the existence of God? And Dr. White's succession comes through Rome, or it comes not at all. What does it matter to the *principle* involved whether two bishops of "our Church" were ever baptized or not? Must truth forever bend and bow to the exigences of a faction? Is not this the conduct of the ostrich, that flies from her pursuer and buries her head in the sand, counting herself secure because *she* cannot see her enemies? Alas that such men as these should sacrifice reason and common sense for a worn-out dogma, one of superstition's darkest children!

But the *fact* is—and it must not be permitted to pass out of sight—that to acknowledge the validity of "lay baptism" is to destroy "episcopal succession" as absolutely as by its denial, for the admission of a valid ordinance in Presbyterianism is to admit a valid Church. Lay baptism was provided for, in the first Prayer-book of Edward VI., in 1549, on the ground of *necessity*, as it was believed essential that every person should be baptized, and that none could enter heaven

* Life of Bishop White, p. 368.

without it.* This barbarous doctrine, that degraded the mercy and grace of God into an implement of profit among an ungodly ministry, is part of the system of the High-churchmen. One of these, Bishop Brownell, of Connecticut, speaks the sentiments of all when he says: "The true economy of the Christian religion regards men by nature as the *children of wrath*. It takes them from this State, which is called in Scripture 'the kingdom of Satan,' and *transfers them by baptism* unto the family, household, and kingdom of the Saviour."†

This act of transfer from darkness to light, from the kingdom of Satan to the kingdom of Christ, is certainly one of the most wonderful works that can be performed by any power of any class or character; and yet the exigences of the case demand that a layman in the Presbyterian Church must be credited with the ability of doing this for the Episcopal Church! A layman of one body not recognized as a Church at all opens the door and admits a member into the true Church of Christ, he, the officiating layman, being out of the Church and out of the kingdom himself! It is said, however, that this baptism is *irregular*, because it is not administered by a minister, but is valid, although irregular. If this be so, the regeneration is "irregular," as a matter of course, and then we have a human soul "irregularly" admitted into the kingdom of God by an "irregular" regeneration, effected by a man who had never been regenerated himself!

It is astonishing that, in full view of the weakness of their system at this point, the advocates of prelat-

* Wheatly on the Common Prayer, p. 372. † Quoted in Puritans and their Principles, p. 372.

ical succession, apparently presuming upon the ignorance of their readers, do not condescend to notice a defect that vitiates and destroys their entire theory. No doctrine which labors under such disabilities can be the truth of God.

It is trifling with the human understanding to require it to receive such manifest absurdities in logic as just deductions from the inspired Scriptures.

Chapter XXII.

Succession Through the Pope of Rome—The Chain Examined—Chapin's Primitive Church—Confusion and Disorder in the Beginning of the Roman Line—"Muddy as the Tiber"—Contradictions that Cannot be Reconciled—Seven Different Lists of the First Four Bishops of Rome—Equal Confusion in Computing the Times of Occupancy—Seven Discords—The Entire Catalogue Involved in Doubt, Confusion, and Discrepancy—Authorities Quoted: Florence of Worcester, Ordericus Vitalis, Matthew of Westminster, Roger Hoveden, and Others—Mr. Chapin's Blunders—Succession from Canterbury in the Same Confusion.

THE episcopal succession through the Popes of Rome presents to the High-churchman the best apology for a chain whose links can be numbered and named. If it can be shown that there were two hundred and fifty-four popes from Linus, A.D. 67, to Gregory XVI., A.D. 1831, as Mr. Chapin claims in his "Primitive Church,"* then, upon the supposition that each of these was a lawful bishop, and canonically ordained, the connection between the present Pope and the apostolic age is proved beyond question. This might be admitted as the truth, however, without profit to the theory of prelatical succession as held by Protestant Episcopalians.

The popes do not ordain each other, and there is nothing to be gained by proving that the Roman chair has been filled by two or by five hundred men. It must be shown that each of these men was a lawful bishop before he became a pope, or that his ordina-

* Primitive Church, p. 347.

tion as a pope made him a canonical bishop. If this can be done, the Roman succession is established; but the Protestant Episcopalian must show that the episcopal grace bestowed by the last Roman prelate has been preserved in the successive occupants of the office in England. The requirements are very many. First, the man must be a Christian—that is, in High-church parlance, he must be baptized. He must be ordained deacon, priest, or presbyter, and bishop successively; and every man in the list of bishops must have been consecrated by *three* bishops, or his claim will be disputed. Let it be understood, too, that these conditions are essential not only in the individuals filling the episcopal chair, but they must exist in every person who has contributed to the “creation” of a bishop. For example: the presbyter who baptized him must have been ordained by a canonical bishop; the prelate officiating in each of his ordinations, from deacon to bishop, must have been canonically regular. If any instance of irregularity occurs, then the whole virtue of the consecration is lost. Nothing can be taken for granted in a case like this. The salvation of the souls of men is staked upon a very frivolous issue, it is true, but the necessities of the theory demand it. Because the Council of Nice passed a canon requiring three officiating bishops for the consecration of a bishop, it is made a rule inexorable. No man can tell how many bishops before the meeting of the Council, and afterward as well, were “irregular” on this account.

Mr. Chapin designates eleven popes of Rome who were deacons only when elected to the papacy. He does not undertake to prove that each of these men

was ordained a presbyter before he was made a bishop; and yet, if this is not done, the succession fails from this cause. In the year 862 Pope Nicholas refused to acknowledge Photius, Patriarch of Constantinople, because he was only *a layman* when he was placed in the episcopal chair. Photius replied that there was no canon in the Church of Constantinople forbidding a layman to be made a bishop. He asserted also that the Latin Church had frequently violated her own canon in that respect. Ambrose, of Milan, was not only a layman, but a civil officer when elected bishop, and his ordination was confirmed by a General Council. Not only so, but he had not been baptized when he was elected bishop, and was ordained to the episcopal office only a few days after he was baptized.* In his reply to Photius, Nicholas admits the fact, but says the case of Ambrose was a miracle, an *infant* having nominated him for the place!

But these are not all of the difficulties in the theory of prelatical succession. To be canonically consecrated is necessary; but it is equally necessary to be lawfully elected, or chosen by the proper authorities. Statutes, customs, rules may change, but it is certainly required that each candidate for the episcopacy should be selected for the office according to the rule of law in force at the time of his appointment. Especially does this apply in the case of the popes. There could be but one "universal bishop" existing at the same time. Of two claimants for the office, both may be false, but there can be only one that is the true Pope. Lawfully elected and canonically inducted into office are requisites for the papal succession.

* Bower's History of the Popes, vol. iv., p. 282.

It cannot be proved that St. Peter visited Rome. Those authors who attempt to prove his residence there differ as to the length of time he spent in Rome. Some say eleven years, and others twenty-five years, two months, and three days. The mention of days in this computation shows, by the extreme effort to be accurate, that the whole matter is a subject of conjecture. But, admitting his residence there, who followed him in the See of Rome? Tertullian, early in the third century, says Clement followed Peter; and Rufinus agrees with Tertullian. Irenæus, contemporary with Tertullian, says that Anacletus preceded Clement. Epiphanius and Optatus, two centuries later, say that Anacletus and Cletus preceded Clement. Augustine and Damasus, nearly at the same time with Epiphanius, say that Anacletus, Cletus, and Linus preceded Clement. Now, here are three different statements as to the place occupied by Clement in the Roman succession. But these are not all. A glance at the following table will show the confusion existing at this point:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Linus,	Clement,	Anacletus,	Anacletus,	Anacletus,	Linus,	Clemens,
Anacletus,	Anacletus,	Clement,	Cletus,	Cletus,	Cletus,	Anacletus,
Clement,	Linus,	Linus,	Clement,	Linus,	Clemens,	Evaristus,
Evaristus.	Evaristus.	Evaristus.	Evaristus.	Clement.	Anacletus,	Alexander.

1. Mr. Chapin's list,* following Eusebius. 2. Tertullian, earlier than Eusebius. 3. Irenæus, contemporary with Tertullian. 4. Epiphanius, later than

* Such is the dire confusion prevailing in regard to these supposed bishops of Rome that even Mr. Chapin cannot preserve consistency in repeating the names. On page 284 he begins the line of Roman bishops from Eusebius, and No. 2 is "Cletus." On page 347 he gives the list on the authority of Eusebius, and No. 2 is "Anacletus."

Eusebius. 5. Augustine, early in the V Century. 6. Ordericus Vitalis, in the XII. Century, and accepted by Baronius and others. 7 Florence of Worcester, early in the XII. Century. It will be seen by this table that Clement occupies every place from No. 2 to No. 5. "Certainly if the line of succession fails us here, when we most need it," says Bishop Stillingfleet, "we have little cause to pin our faith upon it as to the certainty of any particular form of Church government settled in the apostles' times that can be drawn from the help of the records of the primitive Church; which must be first cleared of all defectiveness, ambiguity, partiality, and confusion before the thing we inquire for can be extracted out of them."*

At the very outset, then, we are brought face to face with a problem that no man can solve. Eusebius, whom High-churchmen have chosen to follow, because he has taken most pains to discover the facts, is a witness against his own accuracy. In the beginning, when about to record a list of the bishops of the Roman Church, he makes an admission that destroys all confidence in his conclusions. Speaking of the Churches planted by Peter and Paul, and of the ministers in these Churches, he says: "There being so many of them, and some naturally rivals, it is not easy to say which of them were accounted eligible to govern the Churches established, unless it be those that we may select out of the writings of Paul."† Indeed, the entire line of succession of Roman bishops depends upon the credibility of an unknown author quoted by Eusebius, and we have no means by which to verify either the quotations of Eusebius or the state-

* *Irenicum*, p. 346. † Eusebius, L. 3, c. 4; Stillingfleet's translation.

ments of the author he relies upon. Is it conceivable that men of good sense can allow themselves to regard as a matter necessary to salvation a statement which depends upon the authority of an unknown author? Surely, in the language of Bishop Stillingfleet, "the succession is as muddy as the Tiber itself."

Let us take, however, one of the seven lists of the first four successors of Peter, and we shall find the same confusion existing as to the length of time assigned to the episcopate of these four bishops:

LINUS.			
	Years.	Mos.	Days.
1. According to Onuphrius	0	2	26
2. M. Pagi	2	0	0
3. Baronius and Labbe.	11	2	23
4. MS. of the VIII. Century, etc.	11	3	12
5. Catalogue of the IV. Century, etc.	12	4	10
6. Second Catalogue of Mabillon	12	5	12
7. Pontifical of Damasus, etc.	15	3	12

CLETUS.			
1. Catalogue of Schelstrate, etc.	6	2	7
2. Onuphrius, in Platina	6	5	3
3. M. Pagi	8	0	0
4. Second Catalogue of Mabillon	8	2	5
5. Onuphrius, in the Chronique.	9	4	26
6. First Catalogue of Mabillon.	11	3	12
7. Anastasius, Platina, etc.	12	1	11
8. Baronius, Bellarmine, and Labbe	12	7	2

CLEMENT.			
1. Second Catalogue of Mabillon	6	1	4
2. M. Pagi	8	0	0
3. First Catalogue of Mabillon.	8	10	1
4. Platina	9	2	10
5. Baronius, Genebrard, etc.	9	6	7
6. Pontifical of Damasus.	9	11	10
7. Catalogue of IV Century	9	11	12

	ANACLETUS.	Years.	Mos.	Days.
1.	Anastasius, Platina, and Genebrard. . . .	9	2	10
2.	Ciaconius	9	2	18
3.	Baronius and Labbe.	9	3	10
4.	M. Pagi.	12	0	0
5.	Onuphrius.	12	1	27
6.	Catalogue of VI. Century.	12	2	0
7.	Catalogue of IV. Century	12	10	3
8.	Catalogue of VIII. Century.	14	2	10

According to the lowest of these estimates the four men occupied the chair twenty-one years, eight months, and seventeen days; according to the highest estimate fifty-two years and six days—a difference of thirty years, three months, and nineteen days.* The highest estimate would place the episcopate of Anacletus—assuming the Pontifical of Damasus to be correct—in A.D. 143, or in the second year of Pius, the ninth bishop of Rome! Yet, with these variations, contradictions, and absurdities in full view, Mr. Chapin records the year of the consecration and the year of the death of each of these men as if there could not be the slightest doubt concerning the matter.

This is not an isolated case. The whole catalogue of the Popes of Rome is involved in more doubt and confusion than any event or series of events in history. There are as many lists of the popes as there are writers who have investigated the subject. No man living can construct a catalogue of the popes and give a reasonable proof of its correctness. Tried by any rule or standard, there are difficulties and perplexities that it is impossible to remove or to solve.

Of the tenth century, Baronius, the Roman Catholic annalist, says: "It was an iron age, barren of all

* *Histoire de la Papesse Jeanne*, vol. ii., pp. 174, 177.

goodness; a leaden age, abounding in all wickedness; and a dark age, remarkable above all the rest for the scarcity of writers and men of learning.”* The confusion in the list of popes assigned to the tenth century is truly appalling. Even Mr. Chapin has failed to give us the day of the month of the ordination of eleven popes in this century. His remarkable exactness as to dates was at fault in this “dark age.” But more than seven hundred years ago disorder and confusion rendered the task of writing a history of the popes a hopeless one. Ordericus Vitalis, the most intelligent and learned Englishman of his time, in the middle of the twelfth century, after giving a list of one hundred popes, up to Leo IV., A.D. 855, says: “Respecting the forty popes who filled the apostolical see from the time of Leo IV to the present time, I have not been able to discover any genuine accounts; I shall therefore venture to say but little about them.

Thus, for nearly a hundred and ten years, eleven popes filled the apostolical see of whom I have been hitherto unable to discover either the genealogies or the time of their elevation or the date of their deaths.”† It must be remembered that this writer is pronounced by M. Guizot to be the most careful, as he was the most voluminous, writer of his age. He devotes sixty pages to the catalogue of one hundred popes, but two pages suffice for the succession from A.D. 885 to 1142. He omits *fifteen* popes that are found in other lists, and the order of his catalogue agrees with no other.

Florence of Worcester, a writer who preceded Vi-

* Baronius: *Annals*, 900. † Ordericus Vitalis, *Ecclesiastical History of England and Normandy*, vol. i., p. 370.

talís twenty or thirty years, brings his catalogue of the popes up to the year 1118. This list was known to Ordericus, for he mentions the work in which it is found. But Florence has only the *names* of the popes, the dates being supplied by other hands. The English editor of Florence of Worcester, in giving this catalogue, says: "There is so much confusion in the list between John, in 972, and Clement II., in 1046, that Blair's is substituted." * Now, it is precisely in regard to these very popes that Vitalis could discover nothing. There is a *partial* agreement between Florence and Ordericus, but they differ to the extent of ten, eleven, or fifteen popes from other and later writers. Who can settle these differences, when they baffled the skill of learned men who lived in the ages nearest to the persons whom they endeavor to portray?

There would indeed seem to be a species of fatality connected with this subject. Mr. Chapin, the champion of High-church principles, whose display of references is exceedingly imposing, has given chapter and section and page of his authorities. His minuteness and particularity, giving the very day of the week and month in which some of the most dubious "consecrations" took place, will amuse any one who ventures to take up his challenge and examine for himself. But, for all that, he is wholly unable to tell a straight tale in his own pages. In Chapin's list No. 141 is John XVII. Two names preceding we find John XV. Between these are Gregory V and Sylvester II. Now, it is evident that there ought to be a John XVI. if we have a John XVII. But where is the sixteenth John? Chapin makes no reply. But

* Florence of Worcester, p. 414, *note*.

the industrious reader will turn to one of Mr. Chapin's authorities, Bower's "History of the Popes."* In that work will be found the statement that Gregory V was a young man, only twenty-four years of age, and quite timid; that he was driven out of Rome by one of the periodical revolutions there, and one Philagathes was raised to the papacy, taking the name of John XVI. The runaway Gregory found the Emperor Otho coming to Rome with his army, and there John, the intruder, was captured, his eyes put out, his nose cut off, and his tongue torn out. In this horrible condition he was obliged to "do penance" for his audacity; but his triumphant rival, Gregory, lived only three years to enjoy his victory.

Now, why is this man called John XVI.? If he was an anti-pope, why give him a *number* among the true popes? Is it not as plain as the daylight that this man had no lawful title to the papal chair? But the papal chair, like the Roman doctrine of baptism, is an affair whose virtue is *ex opere operato*. He who sits in the chair becomes a pope of some kind; and therefore the pope who followed Sylvester was called John XVII., and his successor John XVIII.

But Mr. Chapin has either copied a faulty list of the popes without examination, and therefore he is no guide in matters of history, or he has willfully sinned against his own principles, but for what object it is difficult to see. In the case of the Johns, he numbers a man wrongfully, while he excludes one of the Johns from the list of popes. In other words, he allows the *number*, but excludes the *man*. He has done the same thing with one of the Leos. No. 127 is

* Bower, vol. v., p. 131.

Leo VII., and No. 150 is Leo IX., while there is no Leo VIII. in his list. There was such a pope, however, lawfully elected, duly consecrated, and he died in the papal palace. That this is the true state of the case, Mr. Bower affirms.* Octavianus, a youth of eighteen years, entered the Vatican by force, was raised to the chair, and took the name of John XII. He made war upon his neighbor princes, but was defeated; and after several years of varied diplomacy he excited the ill-will of so many princes and ecclesiastics that they met in council, summoned him to resign; and, upon his refusal, they deposed him, and elected Leo VIII., who was ordained on December 6, 963. This pope was as legally elected as any man who had occupied the chair at any time; but the deposed Pope purchased the good-will of the Romans, entered the city, and drove out Leo VIII. John held a council in Rome, deposed Leo, and suspended the bishops that had ordained him. On the death of John, the Romans, persisting in rebellion, chose Benedict V. The Emperor marched to Rome with an army, to whom the Romans surrendered. A council was called, Benedict was deposed, and he publicly begged the pardon of Pope Leo and the Emperor. Peace being restored, Leo was recognized by all parties, and died in possession of the chair.

Notwithstanding these facts, Mr. Chapin places John, the usurper, and Benedict, the false pope, in the list, and *excludes* Leo VIII., a bishop regularly elected and canonically ordained. Why is this? It is because he has copied the list of popes as it is generally received by Roman Catholic writers of this day.

* History of the Popes, Anno 956, *et seq.*

It is a matter of no moment to Romanists to exclude Leo VIII. from their list, but he was once numbered and acknowledged by them. As they have seen proper to discard him from the chair, they are compelled to preserve the number of his pontificate in order to prevent still greater confusion. For example: if John XVII. had not recognized John XVI. as a true pope, he would not have taken the number XVII. As he did take that number, and hence John XVI. was considered by his contemporaries as a true pope, the principles of Mr. Chapin compel him to place this name upon his list. But if he did that, his infallible succession would differ from the Roman list, and therefore, to preserve a *show* of episcopal succession in Rome, he adopts the errors and blunders of the Roman Catholic writers. By examining the list of Mr. Chapin the reader will find no less than *five* of these cases. Benedict X., Boniface VII., John XVI. and John XX., and Leo VIII. are omitted, but their successors are numbered as if the omitted names appeared in their proper order. The Roman Church, by the stroke of the pen of Leo XIII., can determine that there shall be counted two, ten, or twenty popes in a given century; but High-churchmen have bound themselves to a theory which requires proof of actual succession in, and legal title to, the office, or their boasted chain falls into a hundred broken links.

These are illustrations of the errors, contradictions, and absurdities in Chapin's "Primitive Church" in the list of the bishops of Rome. But these are only a few instances of gross errors. There are many more. Within a period of less than two hundred years Mr. Chapin has omitted several popes who, according to

Bower, his own authority, are rightfully numbered among the Roman pontiffs, and he has inserted several who had no claim, legal or moral, to the papal chair. He has given dates with a positiveness that implied certainty, where there is no possibility of determining any thing more than the Roman Catholic "probable opinion." And yet, upon guesses, conjectures, and a vigorous exercise of confident assertions, he undertakes to establish a theory which degrades sixty thousand ministers in the United States, and deprives fifty millions of people of the Christian ordinances.

The common sense of mankind attaches great importance to the adage *Falsus in uno, falsus in omnibus*—false in one point, unreliable in all. This is true of those who occupy the attitude of teachers, and especially of those who presume to challenge the criticism of society in the advocacy of a dogma which is obnoxious to the Christian law of love. If a man professes to teach the truth, and does not know that the assertions he makes are founded in truth, or if he has not exercised ordinary patience in discovering the truth, he forfeits the confidence of those whom he professes to instruct.

Mr. Chapin has made some very bold assertions concerning the lines of succession from Canterbury, Arles, Lyons, Ephesus, etc. He does not consider the Roman line essential by any means, as—to use a phrase of another writer of his Church—the British Church, or the Church of England, is *autocephalous*, carries its own head, and need not seek one in Lyons, Rome, or Ephesus. By this we understand that it is capable of proof that an apostle planted Christianity in Britain, ordained bishops there, and this episcopal succes-

sion is a fact, a demonstrable fact, at this day. But a close examination of Mr. Chapin's authorities in other lists of "succession" will prove as disastrous to his credibility as this brief review of his papal line.

To the succession from Canterbury we turn with deeper interest, because the sources of information are equally abundant, while a greater degree of importance attaches to the result. It is a matter of no moment to the Romanists whether episcopal succession can be proved or not. Roman "apostolical succession" is not in a line of bishops, but in the *papal chair*. Legal election, canonical induction, and actual possession of the chair are the three points of the Roman law. The last of the three, in the dark ages, atoned for any fault or flaw in the other legal requirements. A pope being supreme in the Church, he could make or mend any enactment, and supply any virtue for any cause. But High-churchmen cannot occupy that ground. To them a *system* must take the place of a man. A system that is a species of machinery having many parts, like the works of a clock, arranged, set in motion, by Christ and his apostles, that will never need repairs or reconstruction until the great day of final account to the Lord of all. So intricate is this machinery that its preservation would require a greater number of stupendous miracles than those that were wrought by the Son of man when he sojourned upon the earth. Miracles too, as Archbishop Whately has suggested, that challenge the divine polity—not in its material, but in its moral order. What greater miracle can there be than the transmission of a spiritual gift through the hands

of the vilest wretches that have disgraced humanity? Not an occasional apostate only, but scores that form an "uninterrupted succession" in all vileness and depravity and beastliness. The doctrine that degrades the gospel by compelling the transmission of the gift that makes what Bishop Hobart calls "a dispenser of salvation" through the hands of drunkards, robbers, and murderers for a series of years or ages cannot be of God.

In the list of archbishops of Canterbury, the thirty-second from Augustine, according to Mr. Chapin's list, is "Stigand, consecrated Bishop of Helsham 1040, translated to Winchester 1045, and to Canterbury 1052." All this appears to be quite regular and canonical, except the fact that only one bishop seems to be concerned in the act of consecration. The usual air of confidence prevails in the foot-notes. References are made to the Saxon Chronicle, Malmesbury, Henry of Huntingdon, Hoveden, and Matthew Paris. The last of these authors may be dismissed at once, because he begins his chronicle in 1235, and never mentions Stigand. It is Roger of Wendover to whom Mr. Chapin ought to refer. But the reader, book in hand, will find some difficulty in verifying the references. The Saxon Chronicle mentions Stigand, but it does not say that he was "consecrated" in 1040, or "translated" in 1045 to Winchester or elsewhere. William of Malmesbury, Hoveden, and Henry of Huntingdon, do indeed refer to Stigand, but not one of the statements made in the text can be justified by the authors quoted.

"Bishop" Stigand was a notorious character in his time. He was "blessed" as the Bishop of East An-

gles, or Elmham, in 1043.* Aspiring to a higher, and especially to a richer see, he “invaded” the bishopric of Winchester.† Taking advantage of the weakness of the King—Edward—he became involved in a series of intrigues which ended in the banishment of Robert, Archbishop of Canterbury. He finally purchased that see for himself, while still holding the bishopric of Winchester.‡ Stigand “invaded the Archbishopric of Canterbury,” says Malmesbury, “a prelate of notorious ambition, who sought after honors too keenly, and who, through desire of a higher dignity, deserting the bishopric of the South Saxons, had occupied Winchester, which he held with the archbishopric.”§ It is easy to understand how he “invaded” Canterbury. Matthew of Westminster tells us it was “by circumventing the simplicity of King Edward.” He had helped to drive out the true archbishop, and he spared no pains to secure the place for himself. Stigand was a “gifted” man. He cultivated the good graces of King Edward’s mother, and encouraged her in her penurious views and conduct toward her son. For this reason Edward, on coming to the throne, “translated” Stigand out of the bishopric of the East-Angles, and sent him adrift. But he was a courtier and a politician. In a short time he had his first bishopric restored, and had “invaded” another. Hardecantute “died as he stood at his drink,” says the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle,|| and his son Edward was a weak man in every sense. The old archbishop, Eadsine, was growing too feeble to perform his duties, and

*Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, An. 1043. †Matthew of Westminster, vol. i., An. 1052. ‡Ibid. §William of Malmesbury, b. ii., c. 13. ||Anno 1042.

Stigand wanted the place. Nevertheless, Robert the Norman got the appointment after Eadsine's death, but there was a chance for the Bishop of Winchester. The Frenchmen and the Englishmen were seldom at peace, and it was easy to involve the country in war. Robert the Norman fled, and Stigand captured the sec.* What the old chronicles call "invasion" Mr. Chapin calls "translation." Stigand was "translated" to Canterbury—that is, he paid down a round sum to the King's courtiers, and he flattered the weak-minded monarch, and courted the good-will of young Harold, who soon after received a crown from "Archbishop" Stigand, and lost it on the field of battle, where William the Norman won it in 1066.

No sooner did William the Conqueror enter the country in triumph than Archbishop Stigand came to render obedience and profess the profound sentiments of loyalty that filled his bosom. He was willing to exchange any amount of loyalty for a comfortable share of security.† The Norman duke—not yet a king—readily entertained the proposition, and Stigand went home rejoicing. He had petitioned the Pope for the bishop's pall, but in vain, until the anti-pope Benedict sent him one. But this pope was deposed, and Stigand intended to use the new monarch to effect his purposes.

William I. was a man of civil as well as military genius. He was soon made acquainted with the course of Stigand. His purchase of Elmsham first for himself and then for his brother; then the invasion of Winchester, and the usurpation of Canterbury, were reported to the conqueror. As soon as he was informed

*Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, An. 1052. †Ordericus Vitalis, i., p. 489.

of these facts, William refused to be "consecrated" by Stigand. It was the office of the Archbishop of Canterbury, but the Archbishop of York performed the ceremony. Stigand was under the interdict of Pope Alexander for presuming to usurp the See of Canterbury in the life-time of the lawful incumbent.* In 1070 a great synod was held at Winchester, in which Stigand was tried, convicted, and deprived of all his honors.† He was convicted of holding two "sees" at the same time, of usurpation, and of wickedly putting on the "pall" of the exiled Archbishop Robert. For receiving a pretended "pall" from the usurper Benedict of Rome, and a variety of crimes and misdemeanors, he was condemned to perpetual imprisonment.‡ "Stigand, moreover," says William of Malmesbury, "in the time of King William, degraded by the Roman cardinals and condemned to perpetual imprisonment, could not fill up the measure of his insatiable avidity even in death. For on his decease a small key was discovered among his secret recesses, which, on being applied to the lock of a chamber-cabinet, gave evidence of papers describing immense treasures, and in which were noted both the quality and the quantity of the precious metals which this greedy pilferer had hidden on all his estates."§ The same author gives us a dismal picture of the English clergy at that period. "The clergy," he says, "contented with a very slight degree of learning, could

* Ordericus Vitalis, iv, p. 52; Florence of Worcester, p. 163; William of Malmesbury, pp. 221, 281; Matthew of Westminster, vol. ii, p. 2; Roger de Hoveden, vol. i, p. 139; Rapin: History of England, vol. ii, p. 232.

† Hoveden, i, p. 118. ‡ William of Malmesbury, p. 221. § Ibid., p. 221.

scarcely stammer out the words of the sacraments; and a person who understood grammar was an object of wonder and astonishment.”*

Now, this is the case of Archbishop Stigand as described by the authors referred to by Mr. Chapin. What shall we say of it? Was Stigand a true bishop, or was he a pretender only? There is no proof that he was canonically ordained. On the contrary, it seems to be a clear case of usurpation. In the synod of 1070, says Ordericus Vitalis, “Stigand, who had been already excommunicated, was deposed. His hands were stained by perjury and homicide, and he had not entered on his archiepiscopal functions by the lawful door, having been raised to his dignity by the two bishops of Norfolk and Winchester by the steps of an infamous ambition, and by supplanting others.”† According to the theory of High-churchmen, a man may buy a bishopric, and supplant any one by any methods; he may stain his soul with perjury and his hands with murder—all these things do not affect his *official* character, we are told. But what if he be ordained by only *two* instead of *three* bishops? Will that serious *uncanonical* fact break the chain of apostolical succession? If not, then the canons are valueless; and if the chain is broken the disaster is a serious one, for eighteen years had elapsed between Robert’s flight and Lanfranc’s consecration.

That the episcopate of Stigand was an “invasion” even Mr. Chapin confesses; for he does not state by whom he was ordained, but parades the canonical ordination of Lanfranc with more than ordinary care. In this he has followed the old chroniclers. “After

* William of Malmesbury, p. 279. † Ordericus Vitalis, vol. ii., p. 31.

a canonical election and lawful consecration," Lanfranc was enthroned in the See of Canterbury. Le Neve, the standard authority upon the subject of the succession in the English hierarchy, says: "Stigand, Bishop of Winchester, is reckoned the next successor (in Canterbury) in 1052; but he was never made so by any other authority than his own presumption, intruding himself into this see during the displeasure of the King toward his predecessor; but (not believing his title to be sufficient to maintain him in it, if questioned) he was wise enough not to resign Winchester, which he was lawful bishop of, but held both together as long as he could—viz., till 1069, in which year he was deprived of both."* The result of the examination is that Stigand was no archbishop, that he fraudulently held a position to which he had no title, and thus for eighteen years a gap is made in the "succession from Canterbury."

Notwithstanding the labors of Godwin and Dodwell, the whole subject of personal succession at Canterbury and everywhere else remains hopelessly confused. Mr. Chapin indulges in the most absolute statements, asserting the impossibility of a "break;" and yet, to maintain his line of Canterbury, he resorts to guesses and conjectures. The canonical "three" consecrators do not appear from Augustine, in 596, to Tatwine, in 731; and following Tatwine, Mr. Chapin says: "Nothelm, consecrated by three bishops, *as it would seem*, at a national synod, 735." For this information he refers the reader to "Saxon Chronicle, 54; Hoved. Ann., i., 230." This is exceedingly amusing. The Saxon Chronicle mentions not a syllable about a

* Le Neve: *Fasti Ecclesie Anglicanæ*, p. 4.

"national synod" in 735. Under the year 736 the Chronicle says: "This year Archbishop Nothelm received his pall from the Bishop of the Romans." Hoveden's Annals begin with the year 732, and under 735 he says, "Nothelm was ordained Archbishop of Canterbury." but by whom does not appear. Not a hint is given concerning a "national synod." The reference "i., 230" in any edition of the book would take the record forward to the twelfth century, whereas the true reference is included in the *first* page of the Annals. Yet the learned author tells us "reference is given to the authorities to enable him who chooses to examine for himself."* The author of this complicated tissue of assertions without proof is reduced at last to "as it would seem."

A critical examination of Mr. Chapin's references will convince the reader that Mr. Chapin never saw the books to which he refers. He has relied upon other writers, and has adopted their statements. The proof is abundant; indeed, the first reference furnishes an illustration. "Augustine, consecrated by Virgilius, twenty-fourth Bishop of Arles, assisted by Aetherius, thirty-fourth Bishop of Lyons, A.D. 596." The references are: "Bede, i., 27, 28; Hen. Hunt. Hist., iii., 184. Gal. Chris., i., p. 540; iv., p. 35." This last book—being a work of the Benedictines, and written with specific designs—we dismiss. It is not an authority. On referring to book i., chapter 27, of Bede's History, we find that Augustine was consecrated by Aetherius, Archbishop of Arles, and not by Virgilius. Nothing is said of the latter bishop, except in chapter 28, which contains a letter of the Pope

* Chapin: Primitive Church, p. 296.

to Virgilius, successor to Aetherius. In a foot-note, however, the editor says this is a mistake, and that Augustine was consecrated by Virgilius and not by Aetherius. Le Neve contradicts the editor of Bede, however, and says that Augustine was consecrated by Aetherius, Archbishop of Arles.* But not a word is said about the presence of Aetherius to *assist* Virgilius. They were both archbishops, and Mr. Chapin calls them bishops only. Even this is not all. The next reference to Henry of Huntingdon amounts to nothing. Henry copied his history from that of Bede, and is not, therefore, an independent witness. Nevertheless, as he is referred to, the reader will find in Henry of Huntingdon, book iii., paragraph 6, the following words: "And now Augustine, the man of God, repaired to Arles, and was consecrated archbishop by Aetherius, archbishop of that city, in compliance with the command of our lord the Pope." The question is not whether Augustine was ordained by Virgilius or Aetherius, but what do the references—Bede and Henry of Huntingdon—say about it. They say that Augustine was consecrated by Aetherius, Archbishop of Arles, and not a syllable is said about an assisting bishop. Yet, to these authorities Mr. Chapin refers to prove that Augustine was ordained by *two* bishops. Is it not evident that Mr. Chapin never read the pages of the Venerable Bede and Henry of Huntingdon?

It would be a formidable task to follow Mr. Chapin through the array of references which bristles at the bottom of his pages. But a sufficient number has been examined to prove that he has taken his refer-

*Le Neve: *Fasti Ecclesiae Anglicanae*, p. 1.

ences from Godwin and Dugdale without attempting to verify them. This is always a dangerous practice, but it becomes highly censurable in one who undertakes to establish a theory which requires the utmost exactness in its proofs. Something probably is due to the errors of the press, and these are omitted from criticism in these pages. But the following is an error of a graver kind. In 1038, Mr. Chapin tells us, "Edsin, Edsius, or Elsin," was translated to Canterbury. His references are four: Saxon Chronicle, Hoveden, Henry of Huntingdon, and Dr. Godwin's "Præsulis Angliæ." As Dr. Godwin wrote in 1601, and was striving to make history for the "apostolical succession," his work is not authority. We have, then, only three writers, or three *books*, for references. The Saxon Chronicle, Anno 1038, says "Bishop *Eadwine*, succeeded to the archbishopric" of Canterbury. Roger de Hoveden, Anno 1038, says "*Eadwy*, the King's chaplain, succeeded Egelnoth as Archbishop" of Canterbury. Henry of Huntingdon, Anno 1040, says that *Eadsige* succeeded Egelnoth. Here are three of Mr. Chapin's witnesses, and every one gives a different name. *He* gives us three names to choose from—*Edsin*, *Edsius*, or *Elsin*—but the names of Mr. Chapin do not agree with those of his authorities. This wonderful man has several other names, for he is called *Elsinus* by Dugdale, and *Elfgy* by the Saxon Chronicle in Anno 1032. Can any one who is capable of reasoning believe in the "canonical consecration" of a man whose name is spelled *eight* different ways, and about whom the authorities differ so widely that they cannot be reconciled? Godwin and Dugdale say it was *Elfgy*, Bishop of Winchester. Chapin says *Edsin*, *Edsius*,

or Elsin, Bishop of Winchester. The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle tells us that Elfsy, Bishop of Winchester, died in 1032, and the Bishop of Winchester living in 1038 was Alwyn; and therefore Mr. Chapin's story is discredited. Besides, one of his witnesses—Roger de Hoveden—says that Eadsy was not Bishop of Winchester, but the King's chaplain, when he was made archbishop. Roger of Wendover, Anno 1038, says "*Athelnoth*, Archbishop of Canterbury, was succeeded by Eadsy."* Within four pages of the "Flowers of History" we have specimens of the utter absence of care in the spelling of names. Unless specially designated by some known title or place, we have no means of establishing the identity of these historical characters. And here we have a tangled thicket. A man with eight names, a King's chaplain, or a bishop of a see filled by another man, transferred to Canterbury, and we are asked to believe that this is uninterrupted transmission of apostolical authority!

* Roger of Wendover, vol. i., p. 302.

Chapter XXIII.

Succession of Powers, not of Persons—Unless Bishops Succeed One Another in Authority, a List of Names Proves Nothing—Dr. Stillingfleet—Archons of Athens and Sparta—Equality of Authority, but Precedence in the Chief—The Right to Ordain—A Test—Ordination Among the Jews—Elders Ordained Elders—Bishop of the Synagogue—Origin of the Episcopal Office—Not of Divine Appointment but Providential Arrangement—Benjamin of Tudela and the Chief of the Captivity—Ordained by the Khalif—Levites Ordained by Laymen—Increase of Churches Called for Chief Pastors—Alexander and the Patriarchate—Patriarchs Ordained by Presbyters—Testimony of Eutychius—Renaudot—Jerome—France, Geneva, Hungary, Germany, the Waldenses, Holland, Denmark, Sweden, and Great Britain, all have Presbyterial Orders—Testimony of Thomas Becon, Cranmer's Chaplain—Chrysostom—Roman Bishops Not Always Ordained—Augustine, Eusebius—Kemble, Jewel, Hooker, Bancroft, Mason, Usher, Goode.

BUT suppose it to be granted that there is a line of names representing real persons, and that these persons were called "bishops" from the times of the apostles, what does it prove? Only a succession of *persons*, and not of *powers*. "If, therefore," says Bishop Stillingfleet, "those that would prove a succession of apostolical power can only produce a list and catalogue of names in apostolical Churches, without any evidence of what power they had, they apparently fail of proving the thing in question, which is not whether there might be found out a list of persons in many Churches derived from the apostles' times, but whether those persons did enjoy by way of peculiarity and appropriation to themselves that pow-

er which the apostles had over many churches while they lived. Now this the mere succession will never prove, which will best appear by some parallel instances. At Athens, after they grew weary of their ten years *Ἀρχοντες* (chiefs), the people chose nine every year to govern the affairs of the commonwealth. These nine enjoyed a parity of power among themselves, and therefore had a place where they consulted together about matters of state, which was called *Στρατηγίον* (the general's residence, or tribunal), as Demosthenes, Plutarch, and others, tell us. Now, although they enjoyed this equality of power, yet one of them had greater dignity than the rest, and therefore was called *Ἀρχων* (chief) by way of excellency; and his name only was set in the public records of that year, and therefore was called *Ἀρχων ἐπωνομῆς* (the archon who gave his name to the year of his office), and the year was reckoned from him, as Pausanias and Julius Pollux inform us. Here we see now the succession clear in one single person, and yet no superiority of power in him over his colleagues. The like may be observed among the *Ephori* and *Bidiaei* at Sparta. The number of the Ephori was always five, from their first institution by Lycurgus, and not nine, as the Greek etymologist imagines. These enjoyed likewise a parity of power among them; but among these, to give name to the year, they made choice of one who was called *Επωνομῆς* here too, as the *Ἀρχων* at Athens, and him they called *προεστωατος εφερων* (the principal of the Ephori) as Plutarch tells us. Where we have the very name *προεστως* (principal chief) attributed to him that had only his primacy of order without any superiority of power, which is used by

Justin Martyr of the president of assemblies among the Christians. Now, from hence we may evidently see that mere succession of some single persons named above the rest, in the successions in apostolical churches, cannot enforce any superiority of power in the persons so named above others supposed to be as joint governors of the churches with them.”*

The principle involved in the controversy is clearly shown when we have selected one ministerial act as a test of the power derived from the apostles. Let us take *the right to ordain* as a test question. It is the only function of a bishop common to a Methodist, a Protestant Episcopal, and a Church of England bishop. We get the custom of ordaining to office from the Jews, and we cannot understand the early history of the Christian Church without a thorough knowledge of the customs of the synagogue. Let us take the city of Jerusalem for a starting-point. It is said that there were four hundred and eighty-one synagogues in Jerusalem in our Saviour's time. Ten persons formed a congregation among the Jews, so that the presumption is there was a like multiplication of places of worship in all of the principal towns throughout the Roman empire. The conversion of five thousand souls in a few weeks at Jerusalem necessitating the division of the Church-members into societies, perhaps ten or twenty places of worship would be sufficient. For each of these congregations a pastor would be required; and this pastor would be a shepherd, a bishop, or overseer of the souls committed to his charge. Twenty of these pastors collected together would form a species of synod, convention, or

* Irenicum, p. 324.

conference to consider the interests and welfare of the Church in the city. Here we see the origin of episcopacy. One man could oversee a Church of one or of five hundred members, but the attention needed by the members of one Church from its pastor would be needed by all the churches in the city from a general pastor. Thus the rights that were common to all the elders in the Church came after awhile to be appropriated, in some particulars only, to the chief pastor. To receive, baptize, and confirm members of the Church were duties belonging to the pastoral office and *inherent* in it. But who shall set apart pastors for the churches themselves?

It is evident that the increase of the *number* of Christians would increase the difficulties in the pastoral care, and therefore the qualifications of pastors soon became a question of great importance. Although any elder had the right to ordain an elder, according to the Jewish law of ordination, it is evident that this right, unrestricted, must produce a harvest of evil. To preserve the dignity, and therefore the usefulness, of the ministerial character, only rightly qualified persons should be ordained to the pastoral work, and it would be unsafe to trust every man with this power. Very soon it happened that the churches, or congregations, preserving the right to select their pastors, delegated the power to ordain them to one who was the president of the meeting of elders or presbyters. The elders yielded, for the sake of good order and permanent government, a right inherent in the ministerial office.

It is probable that all the officers of the synagogue were ordained. We know that the elders or presbyters of the Sanhedrim were set apart to that high

office by the imposition of hands. From a writer of the twelfth century we have positive testimony in regard to the principal officers of the synagogue. Benjamin of Tudela's "Itinerary" is quoted by Bishop Stillingfleet to prove that the "Chief of the Captivity" residing at Bagdad authorized the synagogues of the Jews in the East to elect and *ordain* their ministers.* This would prove that the power of ordination was delegated to each synagogue. But this appears to be an error growing out of the defective manuscript employed in the edition of L'Empereur. Since the days of Bishop Stillingfleet, a better text of the Rabbi Benjamin of Tudela has been published and edited by Asher. The Rabbi Benjamin, speaking of the "Chief of the Captivity" in Bagdad, R. Daniel Ben Chisdai, and his authority over the synagogues of Mesopotamia and the greater part of Asia, says: "Permission is granted by the Prince of Captivity to all the Jewish congregations of these different countries to elect rabbis and ministers, all of whom appear before him in order to receive consecration and the permission to officiate, upon which occasions presents and valuable gifts are offered to him, even from the remotest countries."† Referring to the word "consecration" in the sentence just quoted, the editor has a note, which says: "The ceremony of consecration performed by the Prince of Captivity consisted in his laying his hands on the heads of the candidates." Thus it appears that the Eastern Jews, as late as the twelfth century, had an office resembling that of the Christian bishop. But it will surprise the reader to learn that this Jewish "bishop" was ordained to his office by the Moham-

* Irenicum, p. 266. † R. Ben. Tudela, vol. i., p. 103.

medan khalif! "At the time of the installation of the Prince of Captivity," says Rabbi Benjamin, "he spends considerable sums in presents to the king, or khalif, his princes and nobles. The ceremony is performed by the act of the laying on of the hands of the king, or khalif; after which the Prince rides home from the king's abode to his own house, seated in a royal state carriage and accompanied by the sound of various musical instruments. He afterward lays his hands on the gentlemen of the university."* This is surely a variety of ordainers and of ordinations! A Mohammedan ordains the Jew, and the Prince of the Captivity the professors in the university. But the "ordination" of the prince conferred by the khalif was purely a *civil* proceeding; for the khalif was not the chief of the Moslem religion, as the religious chief was styled the Imam. In any case, however, "episcopal succession" is out of the question here, considered from any point of view. Whether correct or not in regard to the absolute allegiance of all Jewish congregations to this "Prince of the Captivity," there can be no doubt that the Rabbi Benjamin has given, in the main, a correct account of this Jewish episcopacy. The chief minister was only a rabbi in order, a chief in rank. Selected by his brethren, they first consecrated him, and the chief of the State—the khalif—invested him with general authority in civil causes; and he, in turn, set apart the rabbis and ministers chosen by the Jewish congregations.

It is worthy of remark that the Hebrew word for "consecration" which is used by R. Benjamin occurs frequently in the Old Testament. In twenty places

* R. Ben. Tudela, vol. i., p. 104.

it is translated by the Seventy by the same Greek word used for "the laying on of hands" in the New Testament, but in four places only does it refer to setting a person apart for the duties of an office. One of these instances is the ordination of Joshua, referred to in Numbers xxvii. 18, 23, and Deuteronomy xxxiv. 9. Moses ordained Joshua to be his successor in the civil, not the ecclesiastical government. In Numbers viii. 10, Moses is commanded to bring the Levites before the Lord, and the *children of Israel ordained them* by the laying on of hands to their ministry for all time. Here we have a consecration performed by laymen. It is very evident, then, that there was no grace conferred by the consecrator in any case. The allusion to Moses, in Deut. xxxiv. 9, is to be understood as descriptive of Joshua's character, not of any gift imparted to the new leader by the hands of the old. "And Joshua the son of Nun was full of the spirit of wisdom, for [not *because*] Moses had laid his hands upon him." It was because of his fitness for the office that he was chosen, and the approbation of Moses is assigned as proof incontestable that he was worthy and well qualified. No other interpretation of these words is agreeable to the sense of the text or to the nature and design of the office. Joshua had been trained, tried, and approved by the great lawgiver, and the seal of his indorsement was the ordination to be his successor by the imposition of hands. Grotius tells us that "all the rulers and elders of the synagogue were ordained by the imposition of hands, from whence the custom was translated into Christianity."* The *chezen*, overseer, superintendent, bish-

* Grotius, in *Evang.*, p. 36.

op of the synagogue, was certainly a similar officer, in many respects, to the pastor of the church in the apostolic era.

The *connectional* character of Christianity—slight at first, growing with every new conquest of the cross, and increasing as the ages developed toward the unity of interest and community of knowledge and power among Christians—must tend to produce the office of a general superintendent. The increase from one church to twenty in a city would cause a similar growth from one city to twenty in a district over whose affairs an overseer would be placed. Thus we have the origin of diocesan episcopacy, an institution impracticable if not impossible in the first century of the Christian era. Supervision, to be of any value, must be immediate, sympathetic, and regular. The superintendent or bishop must be near enough to the flock to understand their wants, and they must receive him as a brother beloved in the Lord, set over them for their profit and edification in all good works. Moreover, the visitation from place to place, so difficult and uncertain in the first century, would modify the character of the episcopal office. A Methodist bishop living in the United States can attend an Annual Conference in Northern India or in China with more ease and comfort, and in less time, than St. Paul could make a trip to Rome and return.

All the officers of the synagogue that were needed by the Christian Church were adopted; and the life, the soul, of a pure and true gospel filled the outward forms that had been only the conservative power of divine truth. The Jew had much advantage every way. He had a house, a form of service, and a de-

posit of truth—a seed from which the tree might grow. The useless customs decayed and died out of the service; the living, useful forms came to a new life and new employment. The members of the body of Christ were provided in the old law; the living Christ came and took possession of his temple, the soul of the sinner born from above.

Perhaps the city of Alexandria will furnish us with the best illustration of the case in hand. It was, next to Jerusalem, the stronghold of Jewish faith and philosophy. The practice of the Church of Alexandria for the three centuries nearest the apostles will demonstrate at once the influence of the synagogue upon the Church, and the character or the form of Church government most agreeable to the Scriptures and best adapted to the wants of mankind. As this is an example which, if established, settles the character of New Testament and apostolical episcopacy so far as the right to ordain is concerned, the testimony will be complete and the sources of information definite and clear.

The evidence is from the pen of one of the Patriarchs of Alexandria, Eutychius by name. He is giving a sketch of the history of the Church of Alexandria, and after mentioning the preparatory labors of Mark the evangelist, he says:

“Moreover, he appointed twelve presbyters with Hananias, who were to remain with the Patriarch, so that when the Patriarchate was vacant they might elect one of the twelve presbyters, upon whose head the other eleven might place their hands and bless him [or, invoke a blessing upon him] and *create him Patriarch*, and then choose some excellent man and

appoint him presbyter with themselves in the place of him who was thus made Patriarch, that thus there might always be twelve. Nor did this custom respecting the presbyters—namely, that they should *create* their Patriarchs from the twelve presbyters—cease at Alexandria until the times of Alexander, Patriarch of Alexandria, who was of the number of the 318 [bishops at Nice]. But he forbade the presbyters to create the Patriarch for the future, and decreed that when the Patriarch was dead the bishops should meet together and ordain the Patriarch. Moreover, he decreed that on a vacancy of the Patriarchate they should elect, either from any part of the country or from those twelve presbyters, or others, as circumstances might prescribe, some excellent man and create him Patriarch. And thus that ancient custom by which the Patriarch used to be created by the presbyters disappeared, and in its place succeeded the ordinance for the creation of the Patriarch by the bishops.”*

*The original is in Arabic, and the extract itself is from the Latin translation of the learned Selden. In order to present the case in all of its features, the Latin version is copied from “Goode’s Rule of Faith and Practice:”

“Constituit item Marcus Evangelista duodecim Presbyteros cum Hanania, qui nempe manerent cum Patriarcha, adeo ut cum vacaret Patriarchatus, eligerent unum e duodecim Presbyteris cujus capiti reliqui undecim manus imponerent eumque benedicerent et Patriarcham eum crearent, et dein virum aliquem insignem eligerent eumque Presbyterum secum constituerent loco ejus qui sic factus est Patriarcha, ut ita semper extarent duodecim. Neque desiit Alexandria institutum hoc de Presbyteris, ut scilicet Patriarchas crearent ex Presbyteris duodecim, usque ad tempora Alexandri Patriarchæ Alexandrini qui fuit ex numero illo cccxviii. Is autem vetuit ne deinceps Patriarcham Presbyteri crearent. Et decrevit ut mortuo Patriarcha con-

High-churchmen have been greatly exercised by this passage. They have exerted all the ingenuity possible to prove that the presbyters of Alexandria did not *ordain* the Patriarch, but elected him by the "lifting up of the hands." Some have gone so far as to place Mr. Chapin's "as it would seem" in the story to account for some invisible bishop, who laid his hands on the Patriarch elect after the twelve presbyters had voted for him. But all these efforts are "lighter than vanity." It is useless to say that the Arabic word in the original for "laying on of hands" means also "to lift up the hands" to vote. This is true of the Greek word to *ordain* in the New Testament, and proves nothing or too much. Besides, the important word in this extract has been placed in *italics*. The presbyters of Alexandria *created* their Patriarch, and a thousand bishops could do no more. No word in any language can express the definite, final, and absolute ordination of the Patriarch more strongly than the word *create*. It cannot admit of disputation except among those who are determined not to listen to reason.

The account given by Eutychius is fully corroborated by Renaudot in his "History of the Patriarchate of Alexandria." After the death of Theonas the Patriarch, "the priests and the people were collected

venirent Episcopi qui Patriarcham ordinarent. Decrevit item ut, vacante Patriarchatu, eligerent sive ex quacunque regione, sive ex duodecim illis Presbyteris, sive aliis, ut res ferebat, virum aliquem eximium, eumque Patriarcham crearent. Atque ita evanuit institutum illud antiquius, quo creari solitus a Presbyteris Patriarcha, et successit in locum ejus decretum de Patriarcha ab Episcopis creando." (Eutychius: Patr. Alex. Ecclesiæ suæ orig. Ed. J. Selden. London, 1642; 4to, pp. 29-31.)

together at Alexandria, and laid their hands upon Peter (*manusque imposuisse super Petrum*), his son and faithful disciple, a priest, and placed him in the Patriarchal throne of Alexandria, according to the command of Theonas, in the tenth year of the Emperor Diocletian.”*

The testimony of Jerome refers to the same fact, and its meaning cannot be misunderstood. After showing that bishop and presbyter are terms employed interchangeably in the Scriptures, he says: “Afterward one was chosen to be over the rest. This was done to prevent schism, lest each one drawing the Church of Christ after him should break it up. For at Alexandria also, from Mark the evangelist to the Bishops Heraclas and Dionysius, the presbyters always called one elected from among themselves and placed in a higher rank, their bishop; just as an army may constitute its general, or deacons may elect one of themselves, whom they know to be diligent, and call him archdeacon. For what does a bishop do, with the exception of ordination, which a presbyter may not do?”†

Commenting upon these words of Jerome, the Rev. William Goode, of Trinity College, Cambridge, says: “This passage, be it observed, does not take away from the episcopate its peculiar rights, but distinctly admits that ordination belongs to that office, and that its possessor has a higher rank than the presbyter; but at the same time it clearly maintains that, as it respects the sacerdotal character, there is no difference between a presbyter and a bishop, the difference

* Goode's *Rule of Faith and Practice*, vol. ii., p. 82. † Hieron., *Ep. ad Evang. Ep.*, 146.

being only to be found in the ecclesiastical distribution of *the duties to be performed by them*; and, what is still more to our purpose, that *appointment to the episcopal office by the presbyters of a Church is sufficient* (as far as *essentials* are concerned) *to entitle a presbyter to perform the duties of the episcopal function.*"*

This is the ground upon which all the ministerial orders of the Protestant Churches stand. France, Geneva, Hungary, Germany, Denmark, Sweden, and Great Britain all are alike dependent upon *presbyterial* ordination for a Christian ministry. No pains was taken by the early reformers in England to preserve an episcopal succession. It was almost impossible to do so if they had made the effort. But Cranmer and his colleagues did not believe in the necessity of a personal succession through canonically ordained bishops, and therefore no effort was made to preserve it. The proof is clear as the noonday. A number of questions were propounded to Archbishop Cranmer, four other bishops, and ten divines of distinction in the time of Henry VIII.; and the answer of Thomas Cranmer, *in his own handwriting*, was examined by Bishop Stillingfleet. In answer to Ques. 12, Cranmer says: "In the New Testament, he that is appointed to be a bishop or a priest needeth no consecration by the Scripture, for election or appointing thereunto is sufficient."†

It is absurd to insist upon special efforts to secure that which was not considered essential. If bishops ordained by the Romanists adhered to the Reformation, it was well, but that was a mere incident. None

* Rule of Faith and Practice, vol. ii., pp. 83, 84. † Irenicum, p. 415.

of them adhered in France or Germany, but the Protestant Churches were regularly organized notwithstanding. To corroborate the liberal opinion of Archbishop Cranmer, we have the testimony of his chaplain, Thomas Becon. After the death of Cranmer, and during the reign of Elizabeth, Thomas Becon published a volume with a preface dedicated to Archbishop Parker and twenty-two bishops of England. He advises them to be careful in selecting pastors for the churches, inasmuch as there were many pretenders and ignorant persons seeking for appointments as shepherds of the flock.

“Therefore, to avoid all such unlearned and unapt persons,” says Becon, “the custom in times past of choosing ministers is greatly to be commended, which was this: the whole parish, or the better part of them, where a pastor was wanted, assembled themselves together certain days before the election, and conferred of the appointment of a new minister. The names of certain honest, grave, godly, wise, sober, zealous, constant, and learned men were prefixed, and set up in some notable place of the city or town, with a schedule or writing to declare that the men whose names were there entitled were appointed on such a day to be chosen ministers in the congregation of God; again, that if any man did know any fault or notable imperfection in them concerning their doctrine or life, they should on such day be present, and object what they lawfully could. If no worthy objection at the day appointed were made, then did the election proceed. But before the election, the parish being gathered together in the name of Christ, they gave themselves to fasting and prayer, and, a sermon

made concerning both the office of the pastor and the duty of the parishioners, *some other minister or ministers, with certain elders of that congregation*, laid their hands upon the new chosen minister, wishing unto him the Spirit of God and the fruits of the same, by this means admitting him into the ministry without albe, vestment, cope, etc., and without docking, greasing, shaving, etc.; and thus, after thanks given to God, the congregation departed." *

These words were written in 1564, and addressed to the bishops of England. He proves not only the election of the ministers by the churches themselves, but the *ordination* was performed by ministers occupying the same rank. Not a word is said about calling in a bishop to ordain. Becon alludes to the first and second centuries of the Church; for he quotes, in proof of his argument, from Cyprian, Origen, and Chrysostom.

If we return to the days of these early "fathers" of the Church, we find the same views prevailing in the Greek and Latin churches. A work of the fourth century attributed to Ambrose says: "The apostle calls Timothy, created by him a presbyter, a bishop (for the first presbyters were called bishops), that when he departed the one that came next might succeed him. Moreover, in Egypt the presbyters confirm if a bishop is not present. But because the presbyters that followed began to be found unworthy to hold the primacy, the custom was altered; the council foreseeing that not order but merit ought to make a bishop, and that he should be appointed by the judgment of many priests, lest an unworthy person should rashly usurp

* Early Works of Thomas Becon, p. 7.

the office, and be a scandal to many."* It does not matter whether Ambrose or Hilary wrote this passage. It was written at a time when the modern High-churchman and the modern Romanist were unknown. It agrees with the preceding testimony, and is utterly destructive to the doctrine of an uninterrupted episcopal succession from the apostles.

"Bishops are superior in ordination only, and in this respect alone seem to excel presbyters,"† writes Chrysostom. This was the case in the time of Chrysostom, for he does not undertake to say when or how ordination became a peculiar function of the bishop. Augustine, however, ascribes it purely to the custom of the Church. "As it respects names of honor," he says, "which the custom of the Church has caused to be observed, the episcopate is greater than the presbyterate."‡ "Every bishop is a presbyter, but not every presbyter a bishop," says Ambrose; "for he is bishop who is chief among presbyters. Therefore, Timothy was ordained a presbyter, but because there was no other above him he was a bishop."§ Here is no mention of Timothy's ordination as a bishop. Presbyters assisted, even if Paul ordained him; and if the powers are episcopal, and the presbyters have not episcopal powers, on what ground could presbyters *assist* in the ordination of a bishop?

That many of the Roman bishops had no ordination to the papal office is evident to any one familiar with their history. Eusebius mentions a case which has

* Comment. in Eph., iv. 11, 12. † Chrysost. in 1 Tim. iii., Hom. x. ‡ Augustine: Ep. ad Hieron., Ep. 82. § Comment. in 1 Tim. iii. 8.

happened many times since. Fabianus was pointed out by the descent of a dove upon his head while the electors were in their assembly, whereupon the people placed him at once upon the episcopal throne.* There have been many such miracles and many such consecrations, for let it be remembered that it is Peter's *chair*, and not the laying of canonical hands on the men who occupy it, that constitutes apostolical succession in the Roman Church.

Mr. Keble, one of the leaders in the Tractarian or Puseyite movement in the Church of England, says that Bishops Jewel, Whitgift, Cooper, and others of the Reformation, never ventured to urge the exclusive claims of episcopacy, "or to connect episcopal succession with the validity of the holy sacraments." This is true; and they did not do so because they had no faith in the divine right of episcopacy. They could not, indeed, occupy any other ground. To admit that the Roman Catholic bishops were such by *divine right* was to give up the cause in advance. No reformation could have been possible under the High-church banner, and the triumph of High-church principles would bring England and America precisely to the point from which the Reformation of the sixteenth century started.

One of the favorite methods of High-churchmen is to quote a long list of writers as favoring their views, while they must know that the quotations they make have been garbled from the writings of those authors, and, as they stand in advocacy of an exclusive episcopal succession, they gravely misrepresent the writers quoted. Many names in their so-called "Catena" are

* Eusebius; Eccl. Hist., b. vi., c. 29.

grossly misreported in this way. Bishop Burnet declares that the Church of England, notwithstanding the lack of episcopacy in the European Churches, did for many years recognize the Protestant Churches of the Continent as true Churches of Christ.* Bishop Jewel, whose "Apology for the Church of England" is one of the religious classics, declares that if not one of the bishops of the Romish Church had joined the reform movement, still it would have been a true Church of Christ without a bishop.†

"The judicious Hooker" is often quoted in favor of apostolical succession as held by prelatists; but Hooker declares that there may be "just and sufficient reason to allow ordination made without a bishop."‡ He exhorts the bishops to "bear in mind that it is rather the force of custom whereby the Church, having so long found it good to continue under the regiment of her virtuous bishops, doth still uphold, maintain, and honor them in that respect, than that any such true and heavenly law can be showed by the evidence whereof it may of a truth appear that the Lord himself hath appointed presbyters forever to be under the regiment of bishops. Their authority is a sword which the Church hath power to take from them."§

When James I. had collected his Scotch candidates for the episcopacy in 1609, the question arose, Should these men, being presbyters of a presbyterian Church, be first ordained presbyters, or shall we take their presbyter's orders as valid? Bancroft, one of the

* Burnet on the XXXIX. Articles, Art. XXIII. † Defense of Apology, part 2, c. 5. ‡ Hooker's Ecc. Polity, viii. 14. § Ibid., vi. 8; i. 14; iii. 10.

most prejudiced bigots of his time, as Archbishop of Canterbury, answered against reördination, saying "that thereof there was no necessity, seeing where bishops could not be had, the ordination by the presbyters must be esteemed lawful, otherwise that it might be doubted if there were any vocation in most of the reformed Churches."*

Archdeacon Mason, author of the famous "*Vindiciæ*," in an appendix to that work, "expressly defends the validity of the ordinations of the ministers of the reformed Churches beyond the seas." "Wherefore, seeing a presbyter is equal to a bishop in the power of order, he hath equally intrinsical power to give orders." "Whereby he means," says Mr. Goode, "that a presbyter, having received the full sacerdotal character, is *intrinsically* capable of passing that character to others when an office or jurisdiction is given him by the Church in which such power may regularly and canonically be exercised."†

This is precisely the case of John Wesley and Thomas Coke. High-churchmen tell us that a man cannot *give* what he does not possess. Mr. Wesley possessed the right to administer the sacraments, and he gave these rights to Thomas Vasey and Richard Whatcoat. There is no violation of the law of prelacy in that case. Mr. Wesley could not *give* the right to ordain ministers in the American Methodist Church, but he could designate a fit person to do this work; and when the Church elected him, Thomas Coke became a Methodist bishop. The Church constituted the office, and Mr. Wesley consecrated Dr. Coke as a proper person to fill it. If the Christmas Con-

* Rule of Faith and Practice, ii., p. 96. † Ibid., p. 97.

ference had refused to accept the service of Dr. Coke, his episcopal character would have perished *ab ovo*.

But the Romanists of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries occupied the ground now taken by the High-churchmen, substituting the Roman chair for a personal episcopal succession. The same arguments used by Jewel, Whitgift, Mason, Fulke, Field, Davenant, and Usher, are pertinent to the cause of an enlightened Christianity in our own times. Mason says that "the Churches in Germany need not seek to foreign bishops, because they have *superintendents* or bishops among themselves; and as for other places which embrace the discipline of Geneva, they also have bishops in effect." He enters into a long argument to show that the "angel" or "star" was the *president* of each presbytery, and therefore, having the power of ordination, was in all essential features a scriptural bishop.*

Archbishop Usher, one of the most learned prelates in Great Britain or Ireland, toward the close of his life affirms that it had ever been his opinion that "bishop and presbyter differed in grade only, not in order," and although the custom of episcopal ordination prevailed, the ordination of presbyters was valid.† To the same effect is the testimony of Bishop Bedell, an illustrious leader of the Protestant Church in Ireland, who in a license to a minister styles himself "syn-presbytero," his co-presbyter and brother in Christ.‡ In like manner we have the words of Bishop Davenant and Dean Field. Dean Sherlock declares that

* Rule of Faith and Practice, ii., p. 99. † Ibid., p. 101. ‡ Life of Bishop Bedell, p. 256.

“a Church may be a truly Catholic Church, and such as we may and ought to communicate with, without bishops.” “The Church of England does not deny but that in case of necessity the ordination of presbyters may be valid.”* Dr. Claget, in the examination of Bellarmine’s seventh “note of the Church,” declares that essential unity of faith is alone required to determine the question of Church unity. “The Church of England does not unchurch those parts of Christendom that hold the unity of the faith,” whatever may be the particular form of their Church government. “From hence, also, the folly of that conceit may be easily discovered that in this divided state of Christendom there must be one Church which is the only Church of Christ exclusively to all the rest that are not in communion with her, which is as much as to say that because there is not that unity amongst Christians which there ought to be, therefore there shall be none at all; and because they are not united in one communion, therefore they are not united in one Lord, one faith, one baptism.”†

These are witnesses from the Church of England and her sister Church of Ireland. They are the true representatives of English opinion, which even Archbishop Laud, High-churchman that he was, could not refute; for he says, in answer to Fisher: “For succession in the general I say this: it is a great happiness where it may be had visible and continued, and a great conquest over the mutability of this present world; but I do not find any one of the ancient fathers that makes local, personal, visible, and continued succes-

* Rule of Faith and Practice, ii., p. 108. † Ibid., p. 109.

sion a necessary sign or mark of the true Church in any one place." *

If this be so, the High-churchmen of this age have positively no support or countenance from English Church history for their extreme and extravagant doctrines. They are the schismatics who break the continuity of Christian fellowship and communion by proclaiming, "The temple of the Lord are we, and heathens all beside." But let them beware how they attempt to make the Episcopal Church of this country, or the Church of England, responsible for the uncharitable opinions which can be supported only by repudiating the Protestant Reformation and an approach to Rome in doctrine and in practice.

The true doctrine of the Church of England is stated by Mr. Goode to be, first, that the power of ordination and general superintendence of the Church was by the apostles committed to the presidents of churches, and therefore they are the proper and regular authorities for the exercise of that power under ordinary circumstances. Second, it follows, therefore, that episcopal ordination is the only regular mode of admission to the episcopal office.† This is no more, no less, than any Methodist Episcopalian in the United States would declare to be the doctrine of his Church. An ordination in the Methodist Episcopal Church performed by presbyters only would be illegal, and therefore irregular. Nevertheless, in the event of the death of all the bishops of the Church, authorized presbyters could ordain to the episcopacy any properly elected and qualified presbyter. We acknowledge, at the same time, the ministerial orders

* Rule of Faith and Practice, ii., p. 121. † Ibid., p. 72.

of every Christian Church that uses *any* form of ordination, no matter what it may be. We do this, because we acknowledge the sovereign authority of our Lord Jesus Christ, as the only *Head* of the Church; and, in those particulars relating to the mere *form* of government in the Church, it has pleased him to give no specific *law* in the Scriptures. The spirit of the Bible, of the Church, and of the age defends this position against all the assaults of mediæval intolerance and superstition.

Chapter XXIV.

The Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts—Its Origin in 1701—Objects—Missionaries Engaged in Making Proselytes—Testimony of Bishop Watson—American Whig—Bishop Porteus Charges the Society with Refusing to Preach the Gospel to the Slaves Owned by It—Dr. Coke Supplied the Society's Slaves with Missionaries—Abundant Means to Make Proselytes, None for the Support of Missions to the Heathen—Intolerance in South Carolina—Society's Missionaries and Their Work—Legislature Captured—Episcopal Church Established by Act of the Government—The Society Improves the Opportunity—Results—Sowing the Seed—Defense—Preference for Fields Already Supplied with Laborers—Hardships of Presbyterians—A "Hunted Thing" in New England—Some Valuable Service—Statistics of Progress in Virginia—Self-denial the Source of Power and the Means of Success.

THE "Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts" was organized in 1701, in the last year of the reign of William III. The avowed purposes of the Society were: "To secure a maintenance for an orthodox clergy, and making other provisions for the propagation of the gospel in the plantations, colonies, factories, etc. To this end the King incorporated the archbishops, several bishops, and others of the nobility, gentry, and clergy, to the number of ninety, into a body, with the privilege to purchase two thousand pounds a year inheritance, and estate for lives or years, with other goods to any value."*

* London Encyclopedia, Art. "Society."

By the phrase "orthodox clergy," the clergy of the Church of England are meant, of course. It does not seem, therefore, that the Society was departing very widely from its original design when we find its policy devoted to the conversion of dissenters to episcopacy. Nevertheless, it was charged, as far back as 1768, that the missionaries employed by the Society were indifferent to the welfare of the heathen Indians, and gave their time and attention wholly to proselytism in the colonies. Two or three men were sent to the Indians, says a writer in the *American Whig*,* only to keep up an appearance and to hoodwink the subscribers in England. Nearly eighty missionaries of the Society were employed in New England and the central colonies, "and settled in the cities and larger towns and villages, in which the regular worship of God had been long before duly kept up and a ministry maintained. These missionaries, to magnify their office and show the success of their mission, transmit regularly to the Society journals of their proceedings stuffed with accounts of the conversion of Quakers, Baptists, Presbyterians, etc.—not to Christianity, but to episcopacy."†

The charge made by this writer is indorsed by Bishop Watson. The "Anecdotes of the Life of Richard Watson, Bishop of Landaff," contains a letter written by the Bishop in 1777, in which he says: "By virtue of my office in the university I am a minister of the 'Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts,' but ever since my appointment to the professorship of divinity I have absolutely refused contributing any thing toward the support of the So-

**American Whig*, p. 25. † *Ibid.*, p. 26.

ciety, because I always believed that its missionaries were more zealous in proselyting dissenters to episcopacy than in converting heathens to Christianity.”*

But a more serious charge was brought against this Society by Dr. Porteus, Bishop of London. The Society *owned* an estate in the island of Barbadoes, a part of the property consisting in nearly three hundred slaves. From the labor of these slaves was derived a large part of the funds that supported their missionaries in America. In 1783 Dr. Porteus, who was then Bishop of Chester, preached a sermon before the Society “He chose as his subject the civilization and conversion of the negroes in the British West India Islands. It appears that for some time before this he had turned his mind very much to the condition of that oppressed and suffering people, and had corresponded and conversed on the subject with several persons possessing property in the islands and others in this country. The result of his inquiry was that the state of the negroes was a most deplorable one, as well in a temporal as a spiritual point of view; and he therefore thought himself called upon by every principle of justice and of policy to excite, if possible, the attention of the public to this great question. This he did in the first instance, by recommending it strongly to the Society, in the discourse which he addressed to them, to begin on their own trust estate in Barbadoes a regular system of religious instruction as an example to the planters, and to appropriate a portion of their funds to so desirable a purpose.”†

*Anecdotes of the Life of R. Watson, Bishop of Landaff, p. 56.

† Life of Bishop Porteus, p. 85.

Never was a more equitable or more meritorious proposition made to a benevolent society. Out of the labor of the poor neglected slaves a large part of the Society's income came, and surely those who professed to be engaged in propagating the gospel among infidels and heathens would hasten to repair the error, not to say the crime, of indifference and neglect toward their own property. But the result was by no means such as either the Bishop or the public had a right to expect. After much debate and a great deal of opposition, a committee was appointed to consider a plan of missionary labor drawn up by the Bishop of Chester. The committee held a session of four hours, and made their report to the effect that "his lordship merited the thanks of the Society for the great pains and trouble he had taken, but that the circumstances of the Society rendered it at that time unadvisable to adopt the plan." "Thus," says the Bishop, "was a final period put at once to a most interesting and important subject, and the spiritual condition of near half a million of negro slaves decided in four hours!

If this example be not set, if this attempt be not made by a society whose professed purpose is to 'propagate the gospel in foreign parts' among infidels and heathens, by whom is there the least probability that it can or will be undertaken?"*

If the biographer of Dr. Porteus had replied to the question propounded by the Bishop in the last sentence of the foregoing extract, he would have complied with the dictates of honesty and candor. The "Venerable Society" refused to send the gospel to the negroes of the West Indies, but Dr. Thomas Coke, a

* Life of Bishop Porteus, pp. 88, 89.

Methodist bishop, three years after that refusal, was carried by the hand of Providence into this field prepared for the harvest. In 1790 he carried out a reinforcement of missionaries, and the negroes belonging to the "Venerable Society" had an opportunity of hearing the gospel preached in Barbadoes by Methodist ministers.

The Society had been relieved of the burden of supporting nearly eighty missionaries in the United States, and yet they complain of the "circumstances" that prevented their giving the word of life to their heathen laborers. From whence came the money that sustained the Wesleyan preachers in the West Indies? In the first place, out of the pocket of Dr. Coke, who gave time, talent, and money to the cause. In the second place, it came from the purses of the people of England whose hearts had been stirred by the thrilling eloquence of Dr. Coke.

But this Society for the propagation of the gospel had abundant means to be employed in the establishment of denominational interests in the American colonies. One of the earliest enterprises which they undertook was the establishment of "the Church" in South Carolina. In 1670 Charles II. granted the territory of the two Carolinas to Lords Berkeley, Clarendon, Craven, and Ashley, Sir George Carteret, Sir William Berkeley, and Sir John Colleton. John Locke, the philosopher, wrote the Constitution of South Carolina, and incorporated into it his well-known principles of religious toleration. But the plan of government vested monarchical powers in the proprietors and their heirs. In 1705 Carteret—afterward Lord Granville—being the oldest proprietor, became Gov-

error, and he determined to compel all persons to conform to the worship of the Church of England. There were many English dissenters in the colony, and one of these, acting as Governor, had obtained from the Legislature a salary and settlement upon the Episcopal minister of Charleston. This generosity of Gov. Blake, a nephew of the admiral who was instrumental in giving the dominion of the seas to England, did not satisfy the English proprietor. Nor did it satisfy the "Venerable Society." Only one of its "missionaries" was at this time in the colony, but the managers in London waited patiently for the "conversion" of the Carolinians. This was effected in the style of the "ward politicians" of more recent periods.

It was necessary to get possession of the Legislature. A fair election was sure to result in a majority opposed to a "Church establishment." The Rev. Mr. Marston, the "orthodox" minister of Charleston, stated that "the dissenters were the soberest, most numerous, and richest people of this province."* Nevertheless, by the agency of one James Moor, a man of doubtful character among his neighbors, Lord Granville manipulated the Legislature until he secured obedient and willing tools. Moor succeeded in forcing himself into the Governor's chair; and when the members of the Assembly did not vote to please him, he dissolved it, and called for a new election. The body consisted of thirty members, and by fraud, intimidation, and bribery a truculent majority was returned. "Jews, strangers, sailors, servants, negroes, and almost every Frenchman in Craven and Berkeley counties, came

* Oldmixon's *Carolina*, in Carroll's Collections, vol. ii., p. 429.

down to elect, and their votes were taken, and the persons by them voted for were returned by the sheriffs.”*

“And this was that Parliament,” says Oldmixon, the indignant historian of those times, “who, to oppress the Protestant dissenters, brought in a bill contrary to the first and last fundamental constitution, to the interest of the colony, and the right of every freeholder there. It was entitled ‘An act for the more effectual preservation of the Government, by requiring all persons that shall hereafter be chosen members of the Commons House of Assembly, and sit in the same, to conform to the religious worship in this province according to the Church of England, and to receive the sacrament of the Lord’s Supper according to the rights and usage of the said Church.’ Every dissenter that was turned out of the House by virtue of this act made room for the most bigoted of the faction to get in; for it provided that the person who had the most votes next to such dissenter should be admitted in his place; and those that opposed the dissenters being generally, according to the before-mentioned author, men of violent and persecuting principles, the faction secured the power in their own hands.”†

This bill was passed in 1704, at which time the Society had only one missionary in the colony, who found five communicants in his parish; and at the end of three years he had increased them to thirty-two. Dying in 1706, his successor complained very loudly that a great multitude of teachers and expounders of all sorts and persuasions had spread a great variety of opinions, and that very few persons understood Chris-

* Oldmixon’s *Carolina*, in Carroll’s *Collection*, vol. ii., p. 429. † *Ibid.*

tianity.* In Charleston, at Easter, he found twenty-four communicants. In 1707 there were five missionaries in the colony, and during the twenty-six years covered by this report, there were eighteen employed, but at no time were there more than twelve agents of the Society at work in the colony, and the reports show only about three hundred communicants. This did not indicate a high state of prosperity for the "Establishment." With every civil and political disability laid upon them, the "dissenters" preserved their self-respect and adhered to their religious opinions. The missionaries circulated prayer-books among the children of the Non-conformists, and now and then captured a few of them; but the growth of "the Church" was very slow. "Upon his preaching at his first coming," says one of the reports of the Society, "to a good number of Churchmen, he had several Independents and Anabaptists who came to hear him, and behaved themselves very devoutly and attentively during the whole time of divine service."† Another report says: "A great many young persons, descendants of dissenters of various tenets, conformed to the Church of England, and several young men of French parentage in Orange Quarter, who understood English, constantly attended his church. The books the Society sent to be distributed by him were of great use, especially the Common Prayer-books, given to the younger people of the French and to dissenters' children."‡

This was sowing seed to some purpose. Carteret, with the civil sword, and the Society, with its mission-

*Account of Missionaries Sent to South Carolina, in Carroll, vol. ii., p. 540. †Ibid., p. 543. ‡Ibid., p. 553.

aries armed with prayer-books, ought to have captured all the Huguenots and Independents in the province. But human nature is very stubborn, and men will reason, societies and noblemen to the contrary notwithstanding. When they saw men like Governor Moor engaged in capturing helpless Indians and selling them into slavery, and listened ever so devoutly and patiently to the reading of a liturgy or the recitation of a moral essay in lieu of a sermon, they felt that there was something still wanting to convince them that the Church of England was the only nursing mother that could prepare the sinful soul for a home in paradise.

While the Carolinas were in the hands of a sovereign proprietary who held them under bonds in order that the "Venerable Society" might teach them how to be good Churchmen, the northern colonies were prepared to resist all measures that threatened their religious freedom. "Our forefathers, harassed by spiritual courts and the power of lordly prelates," says a writer in the controversy of 1768, "being likewise denied the privilege of peaceably worshiping God in a way most agreeable to their consciences, at last wearied out with persecution, resolved to leave their native country, and seek shelter in the wilds of America. The power of the Church of England by law established they imagined was confined to England.

No sooner was the country settled, towns built, and prospects of peace and plenty opening to their view, than those prelates from whose power and persecution they had fled began to envy them their liberty, and to lay plans and concert measures to bring them again under the yoke of bondage. To prepare

the way, a Society is formed under the specious pretense of propagating Christianity in foreign parts, a fund is established for defraying the expenses, and pious, well-disposed persons are desired to contribute to this fund.”*

In defense of the Society it was alleged that there was no disposition to domineer over the Non-conformists in New England, but only to provide “church services” for those who were, both by birth and by choice, members of the Church of England. But there were ready answers to these professions of fair dealing. Did not the proprietors of the Carolina colonies enact the most stringent laws against dissenters, disqualifying them from holding any civil office? Were not Puritans banished from Virginia, and peaceable Presbyterians and Baptists imprisoned and fined for no offense but that of preaching the gospel? Did not the laws of Maryland require of every man to contribute to the maintenance of the Episcopal clergy? Moreover, it was susceptible of proof that a majority of the citizens in these colonies had never selected the clergymen of the Church of England for their pastors, but in every instance the colonial establishments had been forced upon the people by the tools of the proprietaries or the agents of the royal Government.

Assertions like these—supported by the proofs, which were abundant—could not be answered by the friends of the Society. But there were other charges of a grave nature, the proof of which lay nearer home. “The Legislature of Massachusetts Bay,” says another writer of 1768, “moved with pity and compas-

**American Whig*, p. 25.

sion for the poor savages in America, who continue in deplorable ignorance of the way of salvation through a Redeemer, lately by Act of Assembly erected a society in Boston to spread the gospel through these benighted tribes. When this law went home for the royal approbation, the pious Archbishop of Canterbury appeared in person, and made use of his extensive influence to have it repealed. Why should the highest dignitary in the Church of England oppose so well-meant a design for the conversion of the heathen? Was he afraid that the known zeal of the clergy and society of Boston would engage with vigor in carrying so good a work into execution, and thereby bring a reproach upon a society in England erected for the same purpose, who, more than half a century past, have been squandering away large sums of money collected for the relief of those savages in the support of a body of missionaries, whose usual feats are some few conversions from other denominations of Christians to their communion? ”*

The preference of the Society was evidently for those colonies which were well supplied with ministers of the Non-conformists, to the neglect of many communities that greatly needed the attention of the missionaries. But ministers of the Church of England refused to place themselves in the hands of the Society to be sent to the remote places on the borders of civilization. In 1769 the Moravians—or United Brethren, as they then called themselves—appeared before Lord Hillsborough, Secretary of State for the American Department. They desired protection against the depredations of certain evil-minded per-

* *American Whig*, p. 84.

sons in Labrador who had interfered with their missionary labors. During the interview between the deputation and the Secretary, "his lordship inquiring more definitely how much, in a round sum, a minister receives, it was stated that in London it amounted to between fifty and sixty pounds per annum; and in the country, where living is not so expensive, something less. He expressed his astonishment at the possibility of any minister being able to subsist in London on so small an income, and added that when he wanted two missionaries for East Florida, to each of whom the Government engaged to provide a salary of one hundred pounds per annum, the Bishop of London did his very best, but was unable to find the men. His lordship regretted the extreme difficulty that existed in procuring missionaries in the Established Church."*

The clergy had no fondness for "border work." It had been well if, refusing to go themselves, they had not placed obstacles in the way to prevent others from doing that work. But growing cities, large communities, the ease, comfort, and society of the more populous and wealthy colonies, had attractions which these so-called "missionaries" could not resist. And they have left, in this line, not a few "successors."

The Episcopal Church in New York City was incorporated by law. When the Presbyterians applied for a similar charter the Bishop of London appeared against them, and used his utmost endeavors to render the application fruitless.† If there was any sincerity in the profession of respect for religious liberty, why was the protection of the law guaranteed to

* Life of James Hutton, p. 464. † *American Whig*, p. 84.

one Church and refused to the other? No amount of argument could alter these facts or make them consistent with any other design than that of securing, by all possible agencies, the conquest of the country by the Episcopalians. The denial of the right to hold property subjected the Presbyterians of New York to serious inconvenience, for they were compelled to secure themselves in possession by making the moderator of the synod in Scotland their trustee. This was a hardship from which the dissenters in England were exempt. Is it strange that this narrow-minded and bigoted policy produced uncompromising enemies to the English hierarchy?

Thus, by oppressive legal enactments in some of the southern colonies, and the manifestation of an intolerant spirit in others, the advocates of episcopacy were fanning the flame that ultimately burned to the destruction of all British interests in the thirteen provinces. This state of things preceded and followed the Revolutionary War. The people identified the friends of the Episcopal Church with the advocates of monarchy and religious bondage.

"In the Eastern States," says Dr. Stone, the biographer of Bishop Griswold, "there was a peculiar weakness in our Church, rendering it extremely difficult either to procure or maintain bishops in the dioceses severally. This weakness arose from the fact that the genius of New England people and of New England institutions was of all others most inimical to the introduction and growth of episcopacy. When Patrick Henry hurled the hot thunderbolts of his eloquence against the tithe-gathering clergy of the British province of Virginia till they instinctively rose

and fled in terror from his presence, we may easily conceive that the auguries of popularity to our Church in that quarter were bodingly dark. But darker yet were they on the shores of New England, where the whole spirit of the people was a more constant as well as a more terrific orator against our Church than even the Virginia Demosthenes, and where for long years every step which she took left the track of a *hunted thing*. After the war of the Revolution, indeed—which resulted in the establishment of free institutions, including the toleration of all forms of religious worship—nothing could be done *openly* against our Church in the Eastern States. It continued to live, therefore, without molestation. Still the breath of popular sentiment set so strongly against it that its continuance was almost as precarious as that of a newly transplanted tree amidst the sweepings of a whirlwind.”*

It was due to the Society for Propagating the Gospel that there was any thing resembling form or symmetry in the Episcopal interest in the Northern and Eastern States. “The Episcopal Church in the non-episcopal colonies never was in such outwardly flourishing circumstances,” says the *American Whig* of 1768. “And no wonder; the Society’s expensive interposition could not but have some considerable effects. It has brought it from nothing to something; it has kept the professors of the Church of England together; and as many like cheapness, even in the way to heaven, some have joined them from other Churches, who were well enough pleased to have ministers maintained for them by good-natured people in England and elsewhere.”†

* Life of Bishop Griswold, pp. 135, 136. † *American Whig*, p. 254.

It must be of this economical class that the Connecticut Episcopalians consisted for the most part; for Dr. Stone informs us that a Congregational minister, whose name was Goodrich, had taken special pains to make a census of the Episcopalians in 1774. He found one thousand and eighty-four in Newtown, nine hundred and forty-two in New Haven, nine hundred and fourteen in Simsbury, and from six hundred and twenty-six to seven hundred and ninety-two in other places.* In seven towns nearly six thousand persons are reported as Episcopalians, and yet not one of these places could support a pastor.† The diligent collector of figures, Mr. Goodrich, looked upon the increase of the Episcopalians as a direful evil, saying that he regarded “the growth of the prelacy as hostile to the spirit of our American liberties, both in Church and State, and favorable to the ultimate establishment here of a monarchical government with a legally associated hierarchy.” Dr. Stone, to whom we are indebted for this quotation from the patriotic Congregationalist, has a singular remark in this connection. “This effort at numbering,” he says, “was systematically and extensively made, and seems to have had some influence, if not in expediting, at least in aggravating the war of the Revolution.”‡ It is difficult to see the relation of an Episcopal census in Connecticut to the war of the Revolution. It is not so difficult to determine the justice of the opinion which classed High-churchmen with the friends of intolerance and absolute monarchy. The “Venerable Society” sent High-churchmen to represent them, and

* Life of Griswold, p. 24, *note*. † White's Memoirs of the Church, p. 13. ‡ Life of Griswold, p. 24, *note*.

if the people judged the opinions of the master by those of the servants, they were to be blamed who suffered themselves to be misrepresented.

Dr. Chandler, one of the agents of this Society, asserted that the Episcopalians amounted to nearly, if not quite, one million of persons in the colonies.* Dr. Stiles of Rhode Island, estimated the Episcopalians in New England at twelve thousand six hundred, while the other denominations amounted to four hundred and eighty-seven thousand.† Rev. Mr. Craig, one of the missionaries, stated that only one-fiftieth part of the people of Pennsylvania professed to belong to the Church of England. In three congregations he had only fifteen communicants. In the counties of York and Cumberland, Pennsylvania, two hundred and two persons are reported, and twenty-nine families in another place. If only one Pennsylvanian in fifty preferred the Episcopal Church, the whole number would be about six thousand. If we estimate a similar number in New York and New Jersey, we have thirty-seven thousand as the total population favorable to Episcopacy in the colonies north of Maryland. This exceeds the estimate of the *Philadelphia Centinel*, which places the figures at twenty-five thousand.‡

Thomas Jefferson tells us that the Episcopal population in Virginia was only one-third of the colony. § Mr. Jefferson wrote in 1781, before any test of a popular character had been made. The attempt to reorganize and rehabilitate the Church in the decade included in the years 1786–1796 proves beyond question

**American Whig*, p. 250. †*Ibid.*, p. 253. ‡*Ib.*, p. 134. § Jefferson's Notes on Virginia, p. 308.

that the Episcopalians in Virginia had not only fallen into an insignificant minority, but that they were by far the smallest denomination of evangelical Christians in the State. The same may be said of Maryland. The pitiful plea that the Church property was taken from the Episcopalians, and thereby their Church was paralyzed and well-nigh destroyed, is not worthy of free American citizens and believers in the providence of God. Where was the Church property of the Methodists? How many acres of land and comfortable homes provided by the State had Asbury and his itinerant preachers? Where were the funds to pay the men who breasted the rivers, penetrated the forests, braved the perils of wild beasts in the wilderness, and still more formidable foes, the savage Indians? Did Asbury sit down and weep, or leave his work to find a warm fireside in a college-hall, when he failed to receive five hundred dollars for episcopal service in Virginia? Shame upon Bishop Madison, claiming to be sent of God as an overseer of the flock, but abandoning the struggle with adversity and taking refuge in a school-room! A college, too, wherein not more than *twenty* pupils had been under tuition at one time for more than seventy-five years of its existence.* Do Episcopalians wonder at the paucity of their numbers in those early days? Do they stand amazed at the fact that, within ten years of its planting in Virginia, Methodism had a larger number of communicants than the Protestant Episcopal Church could claim fifty years after its organization? The solution is found in part, in the fact that the Methodist Bishop Asbury lived upon a salary of sixty-four

* Protestant Episcopal Church in Virginia, p. 82.

dollars per annum, and the Episcopal Bishop Madison found five hundred dollars too little to supply him with the necessities of life.

The Holy Scriptures pronounce the sin of covetousness to be a species of idolatry, and no defense can be made or ought to be made in the case of those who are able to pay for the gospel and *will not*. Nor are those people acting wisely or in their own interest who stint their pastors, and compel them to submit to humiliation and discomfort under the plea of protecting their ministers from pride and luxury. All this is a delusion of Satan, and the righteous Lord will require a settlement in his own way and at his own time. But the man who professes to be called of God to preach the gospel and forsakes his mission, because he is required to give up some of the comforts of life, is not in the apostolical succession, although half the episcopal hands in Christendom may have been laid upon his head.

Appendix.

LETTER OF BISHOP ASBURY

THE author of this volume is indebted to the kindness of the Rev. Collins Denny, of the Baltimore Conference, for the use of the following letter, written by Bishop Asbury. I believe that it now appears in print for the first time. It is addressed to

“Rev. Christopher Frye, Harrisburgh, Rockingham County, West Virginia.

“PITTSBURGH, Sept. 2, 1811.

“*My Dear Son*: O the grace we need! and what a fullness! I—we want meekness more than Moses—courage like Joshua—faith like Abraham—a spirit of prayer like Jacob—zeal like Paul! O grace! O grace! The superintendency have unshaken confidence in you. Yet as we cannot see thy District, they wish to hear from you. Our general prospects are good in the States, Territories, and provinces, for 3,000 miles north and south, 1,000 east and west! Gruber and Quinn before the wind for camp-meetings! 10,000 increase this year; 669 effective and defective men on our minutes. I think we congregate in America 3 millions—our camp and conference meetings from 3 to 5, to 10,000 in the course of 6 days. Will you write us to Camden, South Carolina, Dec. 10 or 11? Perhaps there may be a struggle in our next General Conference; either the government shall be Presbyterian and lame, or Episcopal in its small remains. If the poison of electioneering obtains, woe to Presiding Elders!—they are the Bishops’ men, keep them back; but it will remain to know, what powers are saved? what the General Conference ceded to the Delegated Conference? and if in dismembering Episcopacy they will dissolve themselves and violate the Constitution?

Bishop McKendree may say, “They have made me, let them unmake me.” I cannot say so altogether. If I was made at all—by the hand of the Lord and good men—I was made before they were, before some froward children were born, or born again. I cannot cast them off! I cannot do without them, if they can do without

me. I must continue in the ship, storm or calm—near the helm or before the mast! As long as I can, I will be with them. My 40 years expires next month: I am enlisted for life.

I never knew how to love the Canadians, till I visited them at the hazard of my life, and loss of the use of my limbs and health; and never knew how well I loved my children in the States till separated by the St. Lawrence and Lake Ontario. I cannot leave you! This will be a glorious fall harvest of ingathering of souls in every State of the Union. I am thine,

F. A—Y."

List of Authorities

CONSULTED IN THE PREPARATION OF THIS VOLUME.

FOR the convenience of those who may desire to verify the facts and statements of this volume, the author has furnished a list of his authorities. In the majority of cases, where the *ipsissima verba* of an author have been quoted, the reference will be found in the foot-note of the page. A number of volumes consulted have not been thus specified, because the authority quoted was deemed sufficient, and further reference would serve no important end.

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